An Appreciative Ethnography of PCSOs in a Northern City

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Abstract

Previous research regarding the emergence of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) has either been impact oriented (Cooper et al, 2006, Chatterton and Rowland 2005, Crawford et al, 2004) or has been concerned with their capacity to improve equality and diversity within public policing (Johnston, 2006). Despite the recent civilianisation of the patrol function (Crawford and Lister, 2004a) and increasing recognition of multiple police subcultures within the police force (Reuss Ianni, 1983, Chan, 1997, Foster, 2003), there has been little attention directed towards understanding PCSO working practices and decision making, their capacity to deliver reassurance or to the potential emergence of a distinct PCSO occupational subculture within the police organisation as a result of their differential role, remit and limited authority.

This study aims to critically examine the existence and characteristics of a PCSO occupational culture and its influence upon the delivery of neighbourhood policing within a northern police force. Underpinned by an appreciative ethnographic approach (Liebling and Price, 2001), it provides an original contribution to understanding the operation of PCSOs and to existing theoretical knowledge and understanding of police (sub)cultures within the context of civilianisation and police reform. The research involved three hundred hours of participant observation of PCSO working practices, individual interviews with twelve PCSOs and two focus groups with neighbourhood police officers across two police sectors of a northern police force.

The study revealed two key findings. Firstly, whilst PCSOs are able to deliver reassurance to 'vulnerable' and 'respectable' residents within target communities, the pursuit of reassurance is secondary to the demands of crime control. The pull of the performance culture and high levels of public demand for service cause PCSOs to become increasingly utilised as a reactive resource and to be deployed in tasks falling outside their remit. Second, represented as a three-fold typology of PCSO culture, the study

thus provides evidence of an emerging PCSO subculture within the police organisation. Widely held aspirations to become police officers amongst PCSOs combined with an emphasis upon and value attached to crime-fighting within the dominant police culture (Reiner, 2000) leads to the construction of a PCSO occupational culture that is both similar to and distinct from police officers. PCSOs endorse characteristics of the dominant culture, including suspicion, solidarity and sense of mission in their efforts to either imitate police officers or support future applications to become police officers. However, their civilian status, limited authority and differential occupational environment also lead to the construction of distinct cultural characteristics and orientations to the role.

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Declaration

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work.

Faye Marie Cosgrove

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Introduction

Faced with rising public insecurities and fear of crime (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997), consistently high crime rates (Garland, 1996), and increasing demands from the public for increased policing and visibility (HMIC, 2001b), the public police have gradually lost the high levels of public consensus once enjoyed during the Golden Era of policing of the 1950s (Reiner, 2000). Challenges to police legitimacy combined with increasing constraints on police expenditure have led to the loss of state monopoly on policing culminating in the growth of private policing (Johnston, 2000), the commodification of public policing (Jones and Newburn, 2006) and latterly the civilianisation of the patrol function (Crawford and Lister, 2004a). In reaction, the police initiated a range of community oriented policing models to restore public confidence in policing, tackle insecurity and provide a more strategic response to lower level crime and disorder, including community policing in the 1980s (Trojanowicz, 1993), problem oriented policing in the 1990s (Goldstein, 1990) and the more recent implementation of neighbourhood policing in 2008 (Quinton and Morris, 2008). Whilst these models vary in their nature, scope and operation, they are all designed to restore public confidence, respond to locally defined problems and reconnect the police with the public. However, typically lacking dedicated resources and organisational commitment, efforts towards community oriented policing have remained on the fringes of policing practice and commonly become secondary to demands for crimefighting and crime control.

The introduction of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in England and Wales following the 2002 Police Reform Act represents the most recent effort by the police service to satisfy demands for increased police visibility and accessibility and restore public confidence. Their purpose was to provide visibility, deliver public reassurance and tackle lower level disorder through the provision of dedicated foot patrols. PCSOs do not have the same level of powers as those held by police constables, are not

equipped with protective equipment, and as such are not expected to engage in tackling criminal behaviour, its investigation or control due to the increased risks to personal safety and the high level of skill and working knowledge that such activities entail. By placing constraints upon their remit and powers of enforcement, and placing emphasis upon dedicated patrol, PCSOs are less likely to be abstracted from local communities to engage in reactive policing duties and are subsequently more likely to be able to devote their time to order maintenance and tackling anti-social behaviour.

Research to date on PCSOs has either been impact oriented (Cooper et al, 2006) focusing upon the effectiveness of PCSOs in tackling crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour or examining the potential for this new tier of policing to increase equality and diversity within the police service (Johnston, 2006). Whilst such forms of research are important in exploring the potential impact of PCSOs as a form of crime control, neither is able to appreciate the experiences of PCSOs or their orientations to the role, PCSO working practices and decision making processes nor the ways in which PCSOs engage with local communities in delivering reassurance. This study provides a more qualitative, in depth exploration of the lived experiences and identities of PCSOs, and of their relationships within the police organisation and in the communities in which they work.

Sociological research into police practices, officer perspectives and motivations to the job have been largely researched under the rubric of 'police culture'. Police cultural research has traditionally had a tendency to locate police attitudes and therefore behaviours into a shared universal police culture, (Skolnick, 1966, Van Maanen, 1973, Smith and Gray, 1985, Crank, 2004). Whilst certain commonalities do exist in the experiences of front line police officers across locations and over time, there have been a number of influential works that have challenged the notion of culture as shared, monolithic and unchanging (Wilson, 1968, Muir, 1977, Reiner, 1978). This growing body of literature presents culture as a complex and multifaceted concept (Waddington, 1999, Paoline, 2001, Foster, 2003), drawing attention to the existence of multiple cultures and the role of the individual in decision making (Fielding, 1988, Herbert, 1988, Chan, 1996).

Chan et al (2003; 19) assert that, ‘even if the influence of the occupational culture is overwhelming, officers’ practices are not necessarily totally guided by it, especially when decisions are made by officers on their own”.

Aims and Objectives

The central aim of this study is to extend current knowledge by critically exploring the existence and characteristics of a PCSO occupational culture and its influence upon the delivery of neighbourhood policing within a Northern police force. Within this central aim, the research seeks to:

- Develop knowledge and understanding of a PCSO culture – their experiences, working practices and attached meanings, occupational identity, and sense of legitimacy and support.
- Critically explore the influence of organisational factors upon PCSO working practices and occupational identity
- Examine relationships between PCSOs and fully sworn police officers and in so doing explore the drivers and inhibitors to integration and effective practice
- Develop a theoretically robust understanding of PCSO culture and operation.

Methodological Approach

There is a strong tradition of ethnographic research within sociological studies of the police organisation and police culture owing to its capacity for richness of data, for uncovering the complexities of police work (Westmarland, 2001a) and due to widespread recognition that prolonged participant observation may be “the only means of penetrating the mine field of social defences [held by the police] to reach the inner reality of police work” (Punch, 1979; 4). Whilst the vast majority of police cultural studies did not set out to be critical, such studies have largely been critical in nature, highlighting police malpractice or poor performance and resulting in negative

portrayals of police culture (Waddington, 1999b). According to Foster (2003) such critical accounts have delivered an imbalanced explanation of the existence and expression of police (sub)culture. This study continues the precedence set by previous ethnographic studies of police work and police culture but is driven by an appreciative methodological approach.

Given the 'politics of mistrust' towards outsiders and academia identified in previous research on the police (Hughes, 2000, Brewer, 2000, Reiner and Newburn, 2008) a more critical approach was unlikely to achieve the level of depth of data required to reveal the complex nature of a PCSO (sub)culture in the organisation or to achieve sufficient insight into their unique experiences of police work and the organisational and political context in which they work. By situating individual PCSOs, their subjective meanings and interpretations of police work at the centre of the research, emphasis was placed on identifying PCSO achievements and 'what is working' rather than highlighting negative aspects of PCSO practice or departure from organisational rules (Skolnick, 1966). Only by adopting an empathetic and non-judgemental approach to interaction and occupying a participant role that was 'betwixt and between' the status of outsider and insider (Hunt, 1984) could the research hope to achieve sufficient insight into the occupational world of PCSOs and the nuances of police culture within the context of wider civilianisation and police reform.

In order to understand how PCSO attitudes, experiences, working practices and identities combine to form a PCSO culture within the context of the wider police organisational structure it was necessary to employ a mixed method approach. The methods of participant observation, qualitative interviews and focus groups were selected as its primary methods of investigation within the context of a case study approach. The police area command selected for the study was ultimately chosen for the volume of PCSOs working within its urban areas, higher levels of crime and disorder and higher levels of deprivation therein, its ethnic diversity, limited consensus in the police and ultimately its reputation for its proactive approach to neighbourhood policing and the enthusiasm of management to encourage effective PCSO practice. In order to provide greater insight into the

organisational, interpersonal and situational influences upon PCSO working practices the research was conducted across two police sectors involving six PCSOs within each area. The two sectors identified for case study analysis were similar in nature in terms of composition, housing tenure and levels of deprivation but differed in the ways in which area commanders had chosen to deploy PCSOs. The first case study area adopted a wider definition of the PCSO role, providing greater variation in tasks in which PCSOs might be employed, whereas the second case study area adopted a more restricted role definition focused around visibility, thereby making collaborative working with police officers less likely.

One hundred and fifty hours of participant observation was conducted with PCSOs in each case study area over a period of thirty-two shifts, between May and November 2007 in the first case study area and between January and June 2008 in the second. PCSOs were observed whilst on patrol, when in the station, when dealing with incidents, and when engaging with members of the public. Observational data was supplemented by individual interviews with each PCSO engaged in the study. Conducted upon the completion of observation in each area, individual interviews were essential in order to obtain depth of knowledge regarding PCSO values and orientations to the role, to explore the relationship between talk and action (Waddington, 1999b) and to develop understanding of particular incidents or challenges observed through observation. A focus group involving neighbourhood police officers (NPOs) was also conducted in each area in order to explore reactions to the introduction and contribution of PCSOs to neighbourhood policing, to examine PCSO skills and competencies and to discuss perceptions regarding the future of the PCSO role.

Structure of the thesis

This thesis is structured into eight chapters. Chapters 1 to 3 provide critical reviews of the literature in relation to the emergence and development of PCSOs, current understanding of police culture and police socialisation and craft skills respectively. Chapter 1 explores efforts by police to improve

public confidence and to facilitate positive police-public relations. In so doing, it discusses the demise of police legitimacy and reviews the emergence and effectiveness of community oriented policing before examining the recent emergence of reassurance and neighbourhood policing within which PCSOs play a central role. Understanding the socio-political context in which PCSOs have emerged is essential in order to understand their role and remit within the current policing landscape. Chapter 2 is concerned with the socialisation process experienced by police officers, paying particular attention to the role of formal rules in determining action, experiential learning and the police 'craft' (Chatterton, 1979). Whilst PCSOs are socialised into the organisation, their 'craft skills' and working rules are likely to be different to those of police officers due to limitations within their role, remit and powers. The chapter concludes by exploring existing literature surrounding 'what makes a good police officer' and the potential for PCSOs to enhance their own credibility and legitimacy from the public and the legitimacy of the police more widely through the application of procedural based policing. Chapter 3 examines current debate surrounding police culture and the notion of a universal police culture. After a discussion of characteristics associated with monolithic understandings of police culture, the chapter explores evidence of subcultural variation within police culture and subsequent implications for the emergence of a PCSO subculture. Understanding the nature and expression of police culture is important in order to appreciate the organisational context under which PCSOs operate and the ways in which cultural and organisational characteristics may impact upon the cultural attitudes or orientations to work of PCSOs.

Chapter 4 explores the research process and methodological approach adopted in the study paying particular attention to appreciative sociology, data collection and analysis and research difficulties experienced throughout the research. Chapters 5 to 8 present emerging findings of the study. Chapter 5 explores PCSO commitment to the role and the challenges they experience in developing craft skills and competencies to support their ambitions to become police officers. Despite variation between individual PCSOs, the chapter argues that PCSOs align themselves with the police

culture in order to achieve value and to support their integration into the organisation. Chapter 6 explores the challenges experienced by PCSOs in 'doing' and achieving reassurance. Operating within communities of conflict, PCSOs experience limited support and legitimacy from residents within target communities. The chapter demonstrates that PCSOs must learn to adapt to the limited authority and legitimacy within their role by focusing their efforts upon reassuring vulnerable and 'respectable' members of the public, by developing craft skills of communication, negotiation and persuasion in a bid to enhance their legitimacy and encourage compliance, and by supporting the delivery of neighbourhood policing through a framework of reassurance. Chapter 7 explores the deployment of PCSOs by the host police force and their integration into the organisation. In so doing, the chapter argues that PCSOs have become a resource for crime control as opposed to a mechanism for the delivery of reassurance as a result of the pressure imposed by both the occupational and organisational performance culture.

The final chapter, chapter 8, is structured around three sections. The chapter begins with an exploration of the implications posed by the key findings of the research with regards to emergence of a PCSO culture. The second part of the chapter provides a reflective discussion surrounding the challenges and tensions in delivering reassurance in an organisation driven by crime control. The chapter concludes with a consideration of the policy implications presented by key findings of the study and an exploration of the impact of the PCSO role upon policing more widely. The study reveals that PCSOs adopt varying orientations towards their role according to their endorsement of characteristics of the dominant police culture, their aspirations to become police officers and the ways in which they manage the demands of their environment and limitations of their role. PCSOs are however, unable to construct their own distinct culture. The police performance culture and increasing encouragement by area commanders to feed PCSOs into wider crime control efforts of the organisation and widen PCSO activities hinders the development of a distinct PCSO occupational culture. Whilst PCSOs are socialised into the traditional culture and its

associated working rules, they are simultaneously excluded from it. Their civilian status and limited authority, and their remit for order maintenance, community engagement and reassurance distances them from fully sworn officers excluding them from the organisational culture. The governing influence of crime control within the organisation and PCSO aspirations to become police officers have a detrimental impact upon the delivery of reassurance. Whilst the study demonstrates that PCSOs are able to deliver reassurance to 'vulnerable' and 'respectable' members of target communities, reassurance is always a secondary concern, pursued when crime control demands are absent.

Chapter 1 - The Evolution of Community Policing

Introduction

The introduction of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in England and Wales in 2002 was rationalised on the basis of tackling lower level crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour, providing police visibility and accessibility for the public, and increasing orderliness of local communities, primarily through the use of high visible foot patrols (ACPO, 2002). The underlying intention of introducing this new addition to the police family was therefore to provide reassurance, improve public confidence and support in the police, and to develop stronger, reciprocal relationships and information exchange with local communities. However, such emphasis on community involvement and participation in policing are not new but have a long history in the foundations of the development of the police.

In order to fully understand the rationale for the introduction of PCSOs it is important to locate their emergence within the context of policing by consent (Critchley, 1978). Public confidence, co-operation and support have been essential characteristics of a democratic professional system of policing since its inception in 1829 (Reith, 1956). The powerful doctrine of the police officer as the 'citizen in uniform' - drawn from the people and acting on behalf of the people - represents a powerful ideology that continues to grant public legitimacy to the police (McLaughlin, 2007). Despite experiencing high levels of public support in the Golden Age of the 1950s, police legitimacy has been challenged due to an overemphasis upon their crimefighting role despite their reduced capacity to control crime (Garland, 1996), abuse of their coercive force and control (Waddington, 1999a) and lack of professionalism (Reiner, 2000), leading to their progressive alienation from the public. In recognition of dwindling levels of public support, a number of policing models have emerged based on the principles of crime prevention, community engagement and co-operation, and designed to restore community relations, legitimacy and consent. PCSOs represent the most recent innovation to restore the archetypal 'bobby on the beat' in a bid to respond to increased

demands for visibility and restore the legitimacy and public confidence enjoyed during the Golden Age of policing in the 1950s.

This chapter is structured into five sections. The first section documents the origins and challenges in securing policing by consent and the demise of police legitimacy. Drawing upon literature from both the United States and the United Kingdom, the second section critically examines models of community and problem oriented policing that have emerged throughout the latter half of the twentieth century in response to growing demands for greater community co-operation, engagement and more proactive styles of policing. The third section considers the research evidence in relation to the crime and fear reduction benefits of community policing strategies, specifically those involving the use of foot patrol. The fourth section examines the emergence and consolidation of PCSOs within the wider context of security and the wider extended policing family, and the influence of reassurance policing. The final section examines the recent advent of neighbourhood policing. Whilst this model has similarities with previous models, emphasis is placed on the co-ordination of neighbourhood police officers and PCSOs in the delivery of local policing.

The Limits of the Modern Police

Inherent in the emergence and successful development of a modern professional police force was the importance of establishing consensus and of securing the public perception of the police as 'citizens in uniform' (Newburn, 2007). Founders of the Metropolitan Police recognised policing by consent was imperative for the success of the 'new police', carefully seeking to assert that the police were doing a job which all citizens had the power and social duty to do, ensuring that the 'new police' were unarmed in order to counter concerns over the police being a quasi-military force designed to control the behaviour of citizens, and espousing a political rhetoric to instil in the public mind that, "the police are the public and the public are the police" (Reith, 1956, 257). Whilst opposition to such sensibilities have been well documented (Storch, 1975 in Fitzgerald et al,

1981, Hay et al, 1975, Brogden, 1982) and questions relating to the feasibility of consensus policing have been raised (Reiner, 2000), public confidence and consent remain essential ingredients in the legitimacy and success of public policing in liberal democracies (Mawby 2002).

The consolidation of modern policing during the late 19th and 20th century (Johnston, 2000) led to the attested 'Golden Age' of policing in the 1950s characterised by the highest levels of public support for the police since their inception in 1829. This stage in police history, according to Reiner (2000), represented the maximum levels of policing by consent that has ever been attainable in British policing, whereby the police were not only perceived as "avatars of order, authority, discipline, and community, but were venerated as totems of national pride" (Reiner, 1992, 761). The police secured such esteem through being "exceedingly well adapted, for much of the period and within its own terms, to the policing demands made of them", (Weinberger, 1995, 208). Loader (1997) similarly argues that the British police officer became a 'condensation symbol' representing cohesiveness, stability and national efficacy at a time when the country was stable and at peace with itself (Jackson and Bradford, 2009). As Loader and Mulcahy acknowledge, such an image has led to "a police force of the imagination" (2003; 315) against which current police forces can't compare. Since this time, the police have witnessed a loss of public faith in their capacity and ability to control crime and to satisfy public expectations and demands (Garland, 1996).

The police as an institution have gradually, but consistently, lost their 'sacred' status due to the combined perceived failure to effectively control crime, (as measured by the escalation of crime rates in the late twentieth century), police scandals involving corruption and malpractice, and increasing militarisation and reported abuses of power, heralding a fundamental change in the dynamics of police-public relationships (Reiner, 2000, McLaughlin, 2007, Loader and Mulcahy, 2003). Indeed, as McLaughlin and Murji, (1999; 218) suggest, as the consensual social order of the 1950s declined, so have public perceptions and confidence in the police;

> "in this sense, police are a 'social litmus paper' reflecting underlying social changes. Police have faced increasing demands on their services, have increasingly become open to greater public scrutiny and financial accountability as a result of growing managerialist neo-liberal influence within criminal justice" (McLaughlin and Murji, 2000; 108)

Indeed, increasing criticism has been levelled at their professionalism when dealing with multicultural communities (Holdaway, 1979, Bowling, 1998) and economically and socially disadvantaged sections of British society, especially young, inner city males, (Cohen, 1979 in Fitzgerald et al, 1981, Smith and Gray, 1983, Skolnick and Fyfe 1994). As asserted by Kinsey, Lea and Young (1986), in exploring the decline in public confidence in the 1980s, it is precisely those sections of the public who suffer the most from crime, that is the excluded, marginalised and economically deprived, who have the most information to impart to the police but yet are least supported and most harassed by the police. Whilst British Crime Survey results consistently show that public confidence in the police is higher than confidence in other criminal justice agencies (Allen et al, 2006), confidence has declined considerably, since the 1980s from 92% of survey respondents in 1982 stating police were doing a good job, to 75% in 2002 (Nicholas and Walker, 2004).

Public confidence in the police has been undermined both by the mobilisation of patrol and an increasing emphasis on crime control and traditional policing methods over crime prevention and service functions of the police (Manning, 1977). Police-community relations have suffered the repercussions of the mobilisation of patrol and increasing technological advancements in communications. Such advancements have led to the police distancing themselves from the public due to the reduced need of face to face contact, where citizens and the police are more likely to regard each other as 'strangers' (Pate et al, 1986). Evidence suggests that changes in patrol practices not only fail to have a deterrent effect on crime, but an increased frequency in mobile patrol does not lead to corresponding reductions in crime (Manning, 1977, Ericson, 1982).

The police, as a public service, have increasingly been evaluated in relation to their performance in delivering their crime control function; that is, the impact of activities on crime rates, their capacity to provide preventative patrol, and their responsiveness to citizen requests for service. Recorded crime continued to rise independently of increased financial input, and technical and tactical efforts were failing in the war against crime, where the police were, in crude terms, no longer perceived as 'delivering the goods' (Brogden and Nijhar, 2005). In consequence, police have subsequently modified their claims to crime reduction (Garland, 1996) and have acknowledged that the police cannot reduce crime alone, but require positive action by non-state organisations and the public as a whole to support their efforts. Garland refers to this as the 'responsibilisation strategy' that seeks to encourage self-help and participation of the public towards crime prevention as promoted through schemes such as Neighbourhood Watch (Bennett, 1990). Whilst such recognition of the 'limits of the sovereign state' (Garland, 1996) and the need for greater public co-operation provides a powerful rhetoric for increased citizen participation in preventing their own victimisation, the, often fruitless, focus on crime fighting and crime control has nonetheless led to service functions of the police, and as a result disorder, quality of life issues, and community relations, being afforded less priority and being subsequently undermined. Traditional methods of crime fighting therefore no longer reduced crime or reassured the public – if they ever did (Bayley, 1994) - leading to reorganization of police tasks, procedures and approaches to tackle crime, and renewed efforts to strengthen relationships with the general public.

Community Policing

In facing up to dwindling public satisfaction with public policing, the failure of traditional policing methods to tackle crime and disorder and the increasing need to restore legitimacy, John Alderson, the then Chief Constable for Devon and Cornwall Police, urged police forces across the country in 1979 to adopt a more community oriented, democratic approach to

policing. Reflecting the work of Bittner (1967), Alderson argued, “police should be more than law enforcers; to use an older term they should be peace officers” (Alderson, 1984; 11, in Newburn, 2003; 87). Alderson has been widely recognised as the pioneer for the subsequent adoption of community policing in forces across Britain, even though many of the activities supported were already established within police practices. Similarly, by 1992 in the United States of America, “50 per cent of the police departments, with a city population of 50,000 or more, had implemented some form of community policing and another 20 per cent had anticipated doing so by 1993” (Trojanowicz, 1993, in Oliver and Bartgis, 1998; 490). Nonetheless, the widespread implementation of community oriented policing across both England and Wales and the USA, driven by its promise of harmonious community relations, has been documented as hasty and without a real understanding of the complexities of its definition and of the level of organisational and occupational reform needed to effect real change (Lumb and Wang, 2006).

In contrast to traditional reactive policing, community policing takes a more comprehensive approach embracing the more inclusive idea of quality of life as the ultimate goal of policing (Kelling and Coles, 1996, Skogan 1990, Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux, 1990). In addition to regular patrol, activities may (or may not) include analysing and solving neighbourhood problems, working with citizens on crime prevention programs, meeting with community groups, talking with students in schools and dealing with disorderly people. In relation to the implementation of community policing programmes in America, Frank, Brandl and Watkins’ (1997, in Roberg et al, 2009; 139) observational study in Cincinnati compared the average amount of time beat officers and neighbourhood officers spend on their daily activities. They concluded that community officers only spent 5% or their day on crime-related activities, compared to 71% of beat officers. Job redesign required by community policing, particularly increasing discretion and autonomy has been positively associated with personal growth and career advancement. Greene (1989; 181) however emphasises the importance of individual differences in how well job redesign will be received, stating;

> “Community policing for some officers may represent a personal growth challenge, the chance to meaningfully participate in work decisions, and the enlightened work environment suggested by these programs. But for other officers, community policing can be something different; it can be more work to be done at the same pay, it can be added responsibility without commensurate authority or autonomy, and it can mean that officer autonomy is actually restricted by an observant and activated community”.

This clearly emphasises the importance of matching personalities with the ambitious requirements of community-oriented policing. Indeed, Mastrofski, (1992) identifies the increased potential for job satisfaction amongst police officers engaged in community oriented policing compared to those engaged in traditional crime fighting policing.

Definitional issues of community policing abound within the literature – interpretations range from it being a policing strategy, an organisational process in which goals of policing are redefined and practices altered, to a philosophy demonstrating a much broader approach intended to improve the public image of the police. The nebulous, often all embracing nature of community policing has been well documented in policing literature. Weatheritt (1983) identifies that it is not a single concept but has a myriad of meanings and as such is a universal term. In recognition of variations in definition, Fielding (1995) identifies three interpretations of the term; first, as a contrast to rapid response and enforcement oriented policing, second, as a process involving shared responsibility for crime control between police and the public, and third, as a means of developing communication with the public and/or interest groups. Invariably, such a wide definition brings with it different philosophies, assumptions and expectations, and one potential explanation for difficulties in defining the term might be due to emphasis being placed upon different aspects programmes whilst using the same terminology (Rosenbaum, 1994). Fielding (2005; 460) suggests that;

> “at its broadest, community policing stands for an iconic style of policing in which the police are close to the public, know their

> concerns from regular everyday contacts, and act on them in accord with the community's wishes".

Officers seek to achieve this aim through long-term assignment to particular geographical areas, undertaking visible patrol and consulting with communities, and by adopting a proactive approach to tackling problems within these communities. It is this conception of community policing that has resonance with the rationale of PCSOs; that is, by increasing the frequency of positive interaction between the police and the public greater information sharing will occur leading to more effective crime prevention and detection. Wycoff (1988; 105) in summarising the role of the police in more effective community oriented programmes, identifies police ought to,

> "listen to citizens, including those who are neither victims nor perpetrators of crimes, take seriously citizens' definition of their problems, even when the problems they define might differ from ones the police would identify for them, solve the problems that have been identified",

in order to achieve a 'reciprocity of exchange' with the public (Skolnick and Bayley, 1986). Success of community oriented programmes is similarly linked to organisational decentralisation from the centre to the local to provide flexibility, local decision-making and greater discretion to respond to identified concerns and problems (Skogan and Hartnett, 1997).

In examining such a concept that holds so much promise, we must question the extent to which such aspirations can be seen as realistic and achievable particularly in an organisation traditional shaped by its remit of crime fighting and control. Brogden and Nijhar (2005) provide an engaging discussion of ten myths about community oriented policing that throw doubt on the potential for its success; four of these are particularly pertinent to this study.

The first myth relates to notions of a homogenous 'community' to which community policing efforts may be directed. Implicit in the notion of community oriented policing is the idea that there exists a community of

combined interest who will identify concerns, feed into decision-making and support the police in providing a more customer focused service. The concept of community is identified by Klockars (1988; 247-248) as;

> "a group of people with a common history, common beliefs and understanding, a sense themselves as "us" and outsiders as "them" and often, but not always, a shared territory".

However, in modern Anglo-American societies there is considerable plurality and diversity that divisions on the basis of morals, values, lifestyles, ethnicities, socio-economic status and age, to name but a few, invariably produce conflict of interests (Johnston, 2000; 54-55). In relation to policing, this presents questions in relation to police definitions of who the community is and the impact of diversity upon policing by consent. As suggested by Waddington, (1999, cited in Brogden and Nijhar, 2005, 51),

> "in a socially divided society, consent will only be provided by those who regard the police as upholders of their way of life, their standards and their property".

It is typically the values of the 'respectable' (Waddington, 1999a) whom police seek to uphold, importing their actions and activities on those sections of the community who do not consent to or support their intervention, and who interpret increased police attention as harassment.

This has resonance with another myth identified by Brogden and Nijhar (2005); that of the universal relevance of community policing. Whilst there is evidence to suggest that programmes have tended to favour those communities with strong community and/or business organisations (Manning 1978), there is also support that areas that have the poorest relationship with the police have also been targeted (Grinc, 1994). Community oriented policing assumes people want higher levels of policing or closer contact when they do not. As identified by Block (1971), fear of or dissatisfaction with police may be strongest in precisely the areas where interventions are based. Similarly, citizens may simply not want to or be able to engage due to the absence of a community infrastructure, or in reaction to a historical or familial opposition to police, may not feel that the police have a legitimate role in local affairs, relying instead on self-policing and informal methods of social control. As concluded by Manning (1978) and Bennett (1994),

community policing, particularly neighbourhood participation, works best where it is not needed – areas with little crime, little division and as an add-on to already existing crime prevention efforts.

A third relevant myth is the enhanced use of discretion to front-line officers afforded by community policing and its impact on the rule of law. The premise is by dedicating police officers to particular geographic areas they will be freed from organisational commitments to crime control and will subsequently have greater opportunity to intervene in criminal and civil matters and to work in partnership with other agents to tackle problems in a way that greater benefits the local community. However, enhanced discretion may negatively impact on particular sections of communities due to a lack of organizational scrutiny. Police may prioritise categories of crime to whatever they think the majority of citizens want addressed, and may encourage inequitable policing, leading to discriminatory enforcement and inappropriate intrusion into private lives (Brogden and Nijhar, 2005). Whilst social norms and local circumstances need to be considered by police in applying discretion (Wilson and Kelling, 1982), it may also be the case that community policing can equally be seen as a means of bending of the law so as to maintain relations and not offend, leading to a weakening of the rule of law, (Greene and Mastrofski, 1988).

A fourth myth identified by Brogden and Nijhar (2005), and by other critics of community policing (Klockars, 1988), is the disparity between police rhetoric and reality. Due to both its enduring appeal to support police legitimacy and consent and its imprecise definition, community policing can be seen as merely serving a legitimating tactic (Kappeler and Kraska, 1998) to bolster relations with the public and the organisation. Referring to the 'Golden Age' of policing, Waddington (1984; 91) clearly concludes;

> "'Community policing' is a romantic delusion, not for the 'world' we have lost, but for one we never had. It harks back to a harmonious idyll, where the police were everyone's friend. It was never like this, and it is unlikely that it ever will be".

Community policing may therefore indeed solely be, as asserted by Manning (1988; 29), “a series of ideological assumptions that link the police to the community and the community to the police in the minds of police administrators” to the extent that it serves as a public relations façade to encourage legitimacy rather than affecting practice in any meaningful way. Indeed, Ericson et al (1993; 41) provide further support by identifying community policing as communications policing; that is, a way to encourage communities to be co-operative and to provide for their own safety, implying a dispersal of responsibility for security and policing (Garland, 1996).

Despite these qualifications, it is difficult to argue against the ethos of community policing – service, consultation, making police more sensitive to cultural complexities and needs – such is the powerful rhetoric and nostalgia it allows, that it wraps police in the powerful and unquestionably good images of community, cooperation, and crime prevention. However, as Klockars (1988) clearly questions, do the police, in embracing such positive rhetoric, set themselves up to fail since they are unable to realise such romantic aspirations and satisfy public expectations?

A Panacea for Police and Community Concerns

The lack of precision within community policing has implications for measuring its success. Such lack of precision enables police forces to incorporate a wide range of activities within the broader concept of community policing that do not involve community engagement or participation, for example, targeted enforcement and problem solving policing. In consequence this introduces the potential of multiple effects and thereby difficulty in ascertaining which innovations are responsible for observed impacts. Furthermore, variations in programme scope can also confound impact evaluation as efforts range from the individual officer to department wide. However, the major barrier to the implementation of community oriented policing is the pull of traditional fire-brigade policing and associated bureaucratic processes of the performance culture.

Emphasis upon crime control and performance indicators can prevent officers from devoting sufficient time to citizen engagement and interaction to achieve community policing objectives (Skogan and Hartnett, 1997); practice thus remains largely unaltered than before any community oriented innovation was implemented. This is a particularly pertinent in relation to the introduction of PCSOs since they should in theory be shielded from such abstractions due to restrictions upon their role. Certainly, a strong message voiced within the literature is that the crime control ethos within the organisation will cause community policing to remain on the periphery of policing. As articulated by Lumb and Wang (2006; 178),

> "the lack of standards of practice, measurable outcomes across consistency of programmes, and the looseness of how the concept is defined, indicates to us that with the changing demands on police, it is doomed as a future goal of police agencies".

Whilst community policing may be utilised to provide early intervention to prevent escalation of problems, there continues to be a need for crime solving and repressive and reactive policing; community policing cannot tackle all crime and crime control will subsequently continue to take precedence in police work (Aronowitz, 1997).

Indeed, a wealth of studies have identified the impact of traditional 'crime fighting' police attitudes as a barrier to reform and commitment to community policing (Lurigio and Skogan, 1994, Rosenbaum et al, 1994, Skogan and Hartnett, 1997). The status of community policing officers within the police has been undermined. Often they have been referred to as 'hobby bobbies' and not deemed as doing 'real policing at the sharp end' (Tilley, 2003) but rather doing a job more akin to 'social work' (Sadd and Grinc, 1994; 37). Indeed, efforts towards engagement and 'softer' forms of police work can sit uneasily with the other aspects of the police role that they are also expected to perform (Skogan and Hartnett, 1997).

The organisational pressures of performance indicators and management can inhibit organisational change and prioritisation needed for community policing (Greene, 2000). Indeed, Crawford et al's (2003)

evaluation of a community policing project in New Earswick demonstrates how efforts to 'buy' the time for a dedicated community police officer to provide a visible presence and perform proactive reassurance and crime preventive roles can fail as a result of the dominance of reactive, crime control responsibilities. The contracted officer was abstracted from community responsibilities to provide reactive cover for officers detracted to operational duties or in reaction to sickness and emergencies to the extent that proactive duties became secondary concerns. Clearly, community based proactive policing was a less pressing priority than reactive 'crime management' policing and public service priorities (ibid, 21). Additional inhibitors to the success of the project included a high turnover of staff and supervision leading to a lack of continuity and familiarity with residents, unrealistic expectations of the project's aims and possible outcomes amongst residents, and a lack of clarity regarding how the officer's time was to be used. Crawford et al (2003; 9) concluded;

> "the New Earswick project joins a long and illustrious list of community based crime prevention initiatives whose high hopes and great expectations have been undone by broad notions of implementation failure".

One clear message from the New Earswick project was the central importance of ensuring that individual officers were not only highly skilled and adaptable in order to fulfil the multiple demands and tasks that can fall under the rubric of community policing, but that they were committed to the principles of community policing. Although drawing upon evidence from the United States rather than the UK, Schafer (2002) explores a number of demographic and experiential/organisational factors identified by past research that influence officer's assessment of, and therefore commitment to, community policing. Although it is important not to make assumptions in relation to the influence of personal characteristics, a number of observations can be made. In relation to race, Skogan and Hartnett (1997), in their research in Chicago, identified that white officers tended to be satisfied with more traditional methods of policing and more pessimistic about the potential of community policing for change, whilst others (Schafer, 2001)

found no correlation between race and attitudes to community policing. With regards to gender, community policing has often been perceived as a ‘soft’ form of policing requiring more feminine characteristics, such as strong communication skills, as opposed to masculine characteristics (Miller, 1999). Studies suggest the effects of age and length of service can have considerable effects on commitment to community policing, but the direction of this influence is disputed. Skolnick and Bayley, (1986), identify that older officers, with more established routines and beliefs are less likely to be supportive, whereas Skogan and Hartnett (1997) identified the reverse; that older, more experienced officers are more likely to be supportive of community policing since they are ‘ready for change’. Schafer, (2002; 675) argues that the final personal characteristic, education, “improves an officer’s ability to ‘do’ community policing”, in that officers with a college education are more likely to be able to visualise the ‘bigger picture’ of their efforts, and seek out and implement solutions.

Whilst the influence of demographic characteristics of officers is important, findings are mixed and the influence of contextual variables cannot be overlooked. Schafer expresses caution in the capacity of previous studies to appreciate the complexity of the influence of attitudes. He argues studies have tended to view perceptions in a narrow sense using the perception of community policing as philosophy and beliefs about community policing as a single concept (Schafer, 2002). Wilson and Bennett (1994) provide support for the importance of conceptual specificity of community policing. They argue that officer resistance to community policing can only be understood when examined in accordance with the structure and nature of community policing within the context of each police organisation and the way in which the philosophy has been operationalised.

Experiential variables identified by Schafer (2002) include prior experience in community policing, encouragement by, and management style of, supervision, and levels of career aspirations. Experience of a community policing environment is more likely to encourage support and understanding of community policing as a philosophy and officers are subsequently less likely to see it as a threat (Greene, 1981). Management

style is highly relevant in shaping attitudes, since those who support initiatives from the 'top' are more likely to be committed to community policing, and strive to foster the same support down to their staff. Schafer (2002) suggests that officers with ambitions to progress in the organisation are also likely to support management innovations, whereas those without aspirations are likely to distrust upper levels of organisation (Johns, 1973, in Schafer, 2002), often perceiving community policing as another policing experiment at the whim of management (Pisani, 1992). Whilst such categories have been perceived to carry influence over police officers, there is to date, an absence of research with regards to levels of commitment of PCSOs and of other multi-agency partners engaged in community oriented policing (Johnston, 2006, Dolman and Francis, 2006).

There are also methodological issues to consider when measuring effectiveness and commitment to community oriented policing. Firstly, impact evaluations vary depending upon objectives to be tested and the definition of success that is used. Evaluations of community oriented interventions can be narrow, seeking only to measure impact in terms of crime reduction, or much broader, incorporating additional outcomes such as reductions in fear of crime, improvements in public confidence in the police, increased detection rates or increased police morale and/or job satisfaction. Therefore, due to its broad definition and philosophical nature, initiatives are varied in quality and research evidence with regards to effectiveness is mixed. Secondly, as identified by Roberg et al (2009; 81), research design of community policing studies have been flawed, including "a lack of control groups, failure to randomize treatments, and a tendency only to measure short term effects", offering little beyond the anecdotal in terms of reliability. Sarre (1992, in McKillop and Vernon, 1999) suggests that rather than simply assessing whether specific criteria has been met, evaluations could be a means of collecting, analysing, and interpreting information of the ways in which the ideas of community policing are implemented and controlled, and as such expanding the standards by which efforts are deemed a success or failure.

Unlike traditional policing, desired activities and outcomes of community policing are rarely as easily quantifiable. Changes in public

confidence, perceptions of safety and police legitimacy, aside from their subjective nature, are more difficult to ascertain (Innes and Fielding, 2006). There is however evidence to suggest that community oriented policing can work in the right circumstances. Chicago's Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) in the United States is one of the most well known success stories. Initiated in 1993 as a change strategy, CAPs represents a large scale sustained effort to implement principles of community policing (Skogan and Hartnett, 1997). Positioning police-community partnerships within beat teams, placing decentralisation at the centre of its objectives, and involving the entire department and city services, the programme embraced aspects of community policing typically deemed to be outside of the scope of traditional policing. The City Mayor acted as a powerful ally from the outset, supporting numerous evaluations of the programme throughout its duration. Using established beats and regular officers and supervisors across the department, the programme aimed to avoid the 'us-versus-them' mentality that can exist between experimental and regular officers. Skogan and Hartnett (1997; 205) concluded "across all the areas surveyed, people who observed more police activity were more satisfied with the quality of police service and felt safer with regard to crime".

Successful outcomes identified in the 10 year evaluation (Skogan and Steiner, 2004) suggest significant reductions in crime within African-American sections, but little improvements within Hispanic communities. In response to such discrepancies, Innes (2006; 96) reminds us that, "community policing cannot be divorced from other aspects of public policy", and "knowing what works does not mean it will always work" (Innes, 2006, 98), thereby implying the difficulties in the transferability and reliability of community oriented policing strategies. Nonetheless, the 2004 CAPS Evaluation Consortium did identify that trends in public opinion towards the police, which were somewhat negative in 1993, had improved consistently over the ten year period across all ethnic groups as measured by officer demeanour, responsiveness and performance as measures of quality (Roberg et al, 2009).

Other studies however suggest that internal organisational change is insufficient in improving delivery and improving satisfaction with policing. The community policing scheme adopted in Madison, Wisconsin in the early 1980s involved a gradual approach to change in working practices in an effort to tackle fear and increase public satisfaction. However, unlike the CAPS program, the intervention was experimental and did not take place across the whole department (Dalgleish and Myhill, 2004). Despite concerted efforts to recruit highly educated, committed officers over a period of two decades, implementing participatory management and encouraging the full involvement of officers in decision making (Wycoff and Skogan, 1993), the study did not secure improvements in resident satisfaction with local policing. It is clear from these evaluations that the importance of co-ordinated, inclusive and integrated structures, in combination with external change, particularly sustained partnerships with residents, cannot therefore be overstated.

Shortcomings in traditional reactive policing has also led to the emergence and consolidation of problem oriented policing or POP (Hough, 1996). Challenging findings identifying a lack of status/opposition of officers to community policing (Newburn, 2007, Skogan, 2006, Sadd and Grinc, 1994), POP has been widely implemented in both the United States and the United Kingdom due to its potential for providing a more effective and efficient handling of police time (Tilley, 2010). Often perceived as a logical extension of community policing (Johnston, 2000) due to its proactive stance, emphasis on community liaison and information sharing and focus on the social context of crime (Tilley, 2003), problem oriented policing aims to direct attention to minimising specific problems rather than tackling individual incidents (Goldstein, 1990). As argued by Bullock and Tilley (2003; 8), “Problem oriented policing may sometimes begin with problems experienced in neighbourhoods and it may sometimes involve mobilising those in neighbourhoods, but not necessarily”. However, there are important distinctions to be made. Unlike community oriented policing, there is no intention to return to the ‘good old’ days, but emphasis is instead placed on

adopting an informed and analytical approach to defining problems and their solutions (ibid).

Despite its promise of greater efficiency and emerging evidence that POP can reduce crime and disorder (Weisburd et al, 2010), the commitment of officers to POP can be questioned due to inconsistency and a lack of independent evidence. Whilst Leigh et al (1998) in their assessment of the adoption of problem oriented policing in Leicestershire Police, stress the commitment and outstanding efforts of some individual officers, they concluded that many officers were cynical, reluctant or unable to analyse data, and similar to reactions to community oriented policing, had a tendency to fall back on traditional methods. Leigh et al (1998; v) consequently concluded, “It is now recognised that a longer-term programme of cultural change is needed to affect alterations in routine ways of thinking and working”, demonstrating the resilience of traditional policing to innovation and change (Chan, 1996).

As experienced during efforts to implement community policing, efforts to implement problem oriented policing have been limited in a number of ways. Firstly, the availability of energetic and able officers has according to Clarke (1998) led to a focus on small scale local problems more akin to ‘problem solving’ rather than ‘problem-oriented policing’. Drawing upon the available literature on POP, Innes (2005; 188) questions the process of defining ‘problems’ and concludes that,

> “a tension remains (sometimes implicit, at other times explicit) concerning whether the police should retain the power to establish what counts as a problem, and the extent to which they should be responsive to the problems defined for them by local communities”,

since problems identified by the police might not represent the most important policing problems within the community (Murphy and Muir, 1990; 70, in Innes, 2005; 190). Secondly, integration into routine practice has been hampered by the police service’s limited ability to engage with problem-oriented policing and an underestimation of the planning and commitment needed to fully implement it (Bullock and Tilley, 2003). In sum, despite efforts

to integrate community oriented and problem oriented policing into police organisations, they have failed to satisfy the public's insatiable demand for foot patrol and traditional reactive policing strategies have remained the status quo.

The Promise of Foot Patrol

The popular, although inaccurate, allegiance of police visibility with community policing (Cordner, 1994) has led to a great deal of research devoted to the impact of foot patrol on crime, disorder and fear of crime. Bahn (1974, 341) emphasises the importance of police presence in fostering feelings of safety, suggesting, "The 'beat cop' represents a presence, always near, always comforting – the symbol of concern and security". In a recent review of research evidence, Zhao et al (2002) concluded that police presence had an impact on fear regardless of how it was implemented, and that when combined with community policing strategies, the impact on fear was more pronounced. However, despite its positive impact on fear, Zhao et al (2002) concluded increased police presence did not have an impact on levels of satisfaction with the police. The Newark Foot Patrol program in New Jersey and Flint, Michigan in the United States (Police Foundation 1981) is one of the best-known examples of a foot patrol experiment. Implemented in the mid 1970s, the evaluation of the study concluded that enhancing the level of foot patrol did not seem to have any significant effect on actual or reported crime rates but did;

> "affect citizens' fears of crime, the protective measures they took to avoid crime, and the perceived safety of their neighbourhoods….In general, when foot patrol is added, citizens' fear of typical street crimes seems to go down and generalised feelings of personal safety go up", (Police Foundation, 1981, in Cameron, 1990; 483).

Pate et al (1986) however, raise a number of questions regarding the validity of the study. Firstly, foot patrol was limited to evening patrols of commercial areas, therefore neglecting any indication of effectiveness of such patrols in

residential areas. Secondly, though favourable results were drawn, decisions to maintain or withdraw patrol showed no consistent pattern. Thirdly, Pate et al (ibid) argue that the statistical strength of the analysis was weak due to the limited sample of residents involved.

Another American study, the Kansas City Patrol Experiment, did not however indicate such positive results. The study examined the effects of increasing and decreasing levels of patrol by two or three times the normal level on a number of dependent variables such as reporting of crime and concluded that fear of crime was not effected (Kelling et al, 1974). Similarly, as noted by Cordner (1994) and in studies by Esbensen (1987) in North Carolina and Pate (1989) in Baltimore, police forces failed to replicate the success of the Flint and Newark studies in relation to improvements in citizen satisfaction with police services. Rather, the Baltimore study identified an increase in resident perceptions of disorder.

There is also evidence from the United States to suggest that increased foot patrol can enhance public satisfaction with policing. Trojanowicz's (1986) study of a foot patrol programme, also in Flint, Michigan, observed improved citizen satisfaction with the program and improved relations with the police. However, questions must be raised in its conclusions about the effectiveness of foot patrol due the potential of multiple effects (Pate et al, 1986) since foot patrol was only one initiative amongst many. Pate et al (ibid) evaluated the Houston and Newark Fear Reduction Strategies intervention which also involved a wide range of interventions including efforts to tackle social and physical deterioration and citizen contact patrols. Using panel data – whereby the same respondents were consulted throughout the intervention - Pate et al (ibid) identified that citizen contact patrol showed positive, statistically significant improvements, suggesting that it was sustained contact and familiarity that led to an increase in perceived effectiveness. However, as Dalgleish and Myhill (2004) highlight, unlike the CAPS programme in Chicago, neither the Houston nor Newark programmes were grounded in change within the local police departments. They suggest that the longer term success of the intervention was dependent upon

“organisational change, resource management and the application and behaviour of officers allocated to the intervention” (ibid, 18).

These studies demonstrate the inconsistency of research findings with regards to the capacity of foot patrol to influence fear of crime and public satisfaction with policing (Rosenbaum, 1994). In the words of the Audit Commission (1996; 19) in their examination of public demand for visibility, “foot patrol cannot be ‘a cure all for every policing problem”. Recent support for the limited capacity of foot patrol to improve public satisfaction can be observed in findings of the evaluation of the National Reassurance Policing Programme (Quinton and Tuffin, 2008). The authors of the report assert that whilst foot patrol was important to people whose ratings in police had improved, it was insufficient on its own to prompt large scale shifts in public perceptions. However, when compared to mobile patrol, foot patrol is no less effective than car patrol and often carries the advantages of image and accessibility (Fielding, 1995).

Despite inconsistency of findings regarding the benefits of foot patrol and increased spending on police services throughout the 1980s and 1990s, public nostalgia for the Dixonian model of policing remained and demand for ‘bobbies on the beat’ persisted. The corresponding steady growth in the adoption of police initiatives based on principles of community policing and problem-oriented policing however could not overcome the increasing managerialist agenda of the early 1990s whereupon service functions of the police were displaced in favour of crime fighting and performance targets (Wakefield, 2007). Government espoused a new rhetoric; one of specialisation (Audit Commission, 1996) in place of community policing. As commented by Reiner (2000; 75), the bobby on the beat was no longer seen as “the bedrock of the force”. Rather, assignment to foot patrol became downgraded and increasing perceived as a failure to embrace such specialisation; foot patrol has come to represent “a reserve from which high-flying potential specialists can be drawn, and a Siberia to which failed specialists may be banished” (ibid, 75).

In recognition of the ineffectiveness of foot patrol in crime detection, emphasis was placed on educating the public to recognise the limitations of patrolling, (Audit Commission, 1996). However, public demand for foot patrol continued. Almost 90% of those surveyed within HMIC's 'Narrowing the Gap' study (HMIC, 2002a) thought that an increased police presence would make them feel safer and 83% felt that it would prevent crime. In relation to the latter, Fitzgerald et al (2002) and Crawford et al (2003) identify that the public typically associate foot patrol with more effective policing; that is, in the course of conducting foot patrols community officers will perform other tasks such as gathering intelligence, dealing with disturbances, and proactively targeting criminals. This suggests, according to Wakefield (2007), that public demand relates to a particular style of policing rather than a specific attachment to foot patrol; specifically a non-threatening, citizen focused format of local policing. The following section will examine shifts in police policy throughout the 1990s out of which the official policy promoting Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) emerged, before going on to explore in more detail the emergence and consolidation of PCSOs, their contribution within the extended police family and their importance to the reassurance policing agenda.

PCSOs and the Reassurance Policing Agenda

Public policing came under increased levels of scrutiny throughout the 1990s. During this time the police were criticised for failing in their fight against crime; crime rates had consistently increased from the early 1980s reaching a peak in 1992 and the clear up rate for recorded crime had fallen from 41% in 1979 to only 26% in 1992 (Morgan and Newburn, 1997). Facing increased public demands for greater accountability and control of police activities, rising crime rates and dwindling levels of public confidence in their capacity to control crime (Garland, 1996), the government began to explore questions of police reform to better support police forces in developing more effective means of responding to increasing demands on resources and

finding more cost effective and efficient strategies towards achieving their operational objectives.

It is however valuable to first consider the origins of this managerialist influence within police service. The influence of managerialism upon the public sector began in earnest in 1979 when the Conservative government first came into power. Conservative ideology saw the “institutions of social(ist) democratic state in a condition of bureaucratic sclerosis” (McLaughlin and Murji, 1997; 83). The public sector was perceived as inflexible, unaccountable, unresponsive and inefficient, and the only way to lift it out of its malaise was through the application of free market and private sector managerialist ideas to their budgets, operation and management. Despite commitment from the Thatcher government to increase police numbers and pay, crime continued to rise, and social unrest and a loss of public confidence in the police became increasing concerns. The Conservative administration realised that an alternative approach towards police governance was needed to restore police legitimacy and accountability.

In 1982, the Financial Management Initiatve (FMI) was launched with the intention of improving effectiveness and accountability of the public sector. In response to the FMI, the Home Office issued the circular ‘Manpower, Effectiveness and Efficiency in the Police Service’ pronouncing that increases in police expenditure would be stopped and budgets would be consolidated. Emphasising the importance of rational management of existing resources, the circular declared that future requests for additional personnel would not only need to demonstrate that existing resources were being used as efficiently as possible, but that measures were in place to assess whether targets and priorities were being met. No longer could the police rely upon political expediency as a sufficient basis for instituting additional resources. Attention was subsequently placed on operational priorities; that is, whether forces could satisfactorily justify how resources would be used and how additional resources would support performance.

From 1991 to 1996 police reform was at the centre of debates within criminal justice policy. A number of significant inquiries were commissioned to support this process of reform, with the purpose of promoting greater efficiency, productivity and effectiveness. The Royal Commission on Criminal Justice was the first of such efforts. Whilst broad in its focus, a principal concern of the Commission, with regards to the police, was to examine the conduct and supervision of criminal investigations with the view of improving efficiency and accountability (Hirst, 1993). Continuing in the drive towards greater accountability, Kenneth Clarke, the then Home Secretary, commissioned a White Paper on Police Reform (Home Office, 1992) entitled 'Police Reform: A Police Service for the 21st Century'. The paper proposed changes to the structure and functioning of police authorities, the amalgamation of forces and the central control of police budgets, although the latter was subsequently abolished. Within days of the publication of the White Paper in July 1993, the Sheehy Inquiry (Sheehy Report, 1993) published its findings. Tasked with examining "the rank structure, remuneration and conditions of the police in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland" (Morgan and Newburn, 1997; 55) the Inquiry made 272 recommendations, including the introduction of performance-related pay for senior officers and short term contracts for new recruits, driven by the intention of rewarding good performance and penalising bad (Jones and Newburn, 1997). Although the majority of elements within the Inquiry were shelved due to a storm of opposition from within the service, ACPO and the Police Federation, the rank structure of the police was subsequently narrowed and fixed term appointments for ACPO ranked officers were upheld. What was perhaps most significant about the Sheehy Inquiry was that it demonstrated the intentions of government to commercially manage the police and police activities and the centralised regulation and accountability of policing that was to be introduced through the Police and Magistrates Courts Act (PMCA) in 1994. This landmark piece of legislation not only introduced national objectives for policing but placed a statutory duty on police authorities to set performance targets and publish annual policing plans.

However, what was lacking within the Royal Commission on Criminal Justice, the Sheehy Report (1993) and the White Paper (Home Office, 1992) according to the Police Foundation and Policy Studies Institute (Police Foundation and Policy Studies Institute, 1996), was sufficient clarification of how the proposed changes would impact on the fundamental role and responsibilities of the police, including the patrol function. In recognition of the increasing challenges experienced by the police to satisfy public demands for foot patrol, the report perceptively predicts;

> "the financial constraints that currently bear on police forces together with increasing demands on the police are likely to mean, in our opinion, that the ability of police to meet public expectations for a visible police presence will continue to be tightly constrained and may in the long term diminish" (Police Foundation and Policy Studies Institute, 1996; para 4.5: 27).

In appreciation of the police's limited capacity to provide public visibility, the inquiry explores the potential for private security patrols, municipal forms of policing, such as city wardens and the Sedgefield Community Force, and increasing the recruitment of Special Constables within police forces as mechanisms of responding to public demands for visibility. The inquiry did not however support the introduction of a two-tiered police service constituting non-sworn or officers with reduced powers as a solution to the problem.

Continuing with the drive for greater efficiency, a further inquiry – known as the Review of Core and Ancillary Tasks – was established at the end of 1993. The inquiry explicitly examined the services provided by the police with the view of making recommendations about the most effective means of delivering core police services and relinquishing those functions or tasks deemed as additional or supplementary (Sheehy Report, 1993). Those tasked with undertaking the review were directed to;

> "see whether there are tasks which it is no longer necessary for the police service to carry out [and] to see where there is scope for using money and manpower more effectively to carry out tasks, which

everyone agrees are for the police service" (Home Office, 1994, para. 6).

Clearly, the review sent a clear message that demands on the police were outstripping resources and placing further strain on the police. The Inquiry set out three categories of police tasks; 'inner core' tasks that could only be delivered by police constables since they required use of police powers and legitimate use of force, 'outer core' tasks that could be delivered by officers, civilians or special constables or contracted personnel providing they were managed by the police service, and 'ancillary tasks' that did not require management or delivery by the police service. ACPO reacted critically to proposals within the report for two principal reasons (ACPO, 1994). First, concern was expressed that hiving off police functions to other agencies, particularly to those within the private sector, would lead to reduced accountability and a poorer quality of service than could be provided by the police (Fortin and van Hassel, 2000). Second, restricting the police to core functions only would lead to a focus only on crime fighting functions whereby broader peace keeping functions and therefore opportunities to engage with the public would be abandoned. For Newburn (1997), such efforts to streamline police services signalled a significant step towards the privatisation or the 'contracting-out' of certain police functions and the marketisation of police services.

The disjuncture between public expectations and the capacity of police to deliver continued and was a central theme explored within an investigation conducted by the Audit Commission into the patrol function (Audit Commission, 1996). The 'Streetwise' report examined the deployment and management of police resources and made numerous recommendations designed to increase performance and productivity and thereby increase the potential of meeting public expectations. One of the key findings of the report was that whilst the public are largely satisfied with police work, they are least satisfied with levels of foot patrol. Similar to conclusions made within the Review of Core and Ancillary Tasks, the report concluded that the police were unable to meet public expectations for visible patrol due to rising demands being placed on police services and the limited evidence of the

effectiveness of foot patrol on tackling crime (Kelling et al, 1974, Police Foundation, 1981, Trojanowicz, 1986). Essentially, high public expectations for visible patrol were viewed as unrealistic both in terms of the numbers of officers that can be deployed and what those officers can achieve whilst on patrol. The report concluded that foot patrol should not be seen as a panacea to all policing problems (Audit Commission, 1996: 6). However, in recognition of the centrality of the patrol function to the British style of policing, the report, supported by the managerialist inspired reports that preceded it (Audit Commission, 1990, 1991), was influential in emphasising the increasing pressure faced by police to deliver value for money by identifying more effective methods of managing crime investigations and patrol (McLaughlan and Murji, 1997).

The managerialist control of policing and the associated restructuring of police responsibilities and services (Home Office, 1994), as predicted by ACPO, led to a focus on crimefighting over service functions in public policing. Policing increasingly became subject to performance measurement and target setting throughout the 1990s leading to the prioritisation of crime reduction over crime prevention or order maintenance (HMIC, 2000). As argued by Crawford (2007: 146), the managerialist culture led to a case of "what gets measured gets done" whereby peacekeeping activities and efforts towards public reassurance became secondary considerations. Police services consequently afforded less and less priority to high visibility patrol, creating an opportunity for other policing providers such as private security and neighbourhood wardens to step in and fill the void left by the withdrawal of police from local communities (Crawford and Lister, 2004a, Crawford et al, 2005). The public police effectively became 'dethroned' as they lost their monopoly on the patrol function (McLaughlan, 2007, Loader 1997). Whilst the police were focusing on reactive demands and tackling crime, public satisfaction with policing began to suffer and perceptions of safety and concern about crime, disorder and incivility increased (Stenson, 2000).

Public reassurance, as a policing priority, grew in importance during the late 1990s in response to the unwavering demand for foot patrol and evidence that increasing levels of foot patrol increased security (Police

Foundation, 1981, Pate et al, 1984, Trojanowicz, 1984, 1986). At the turn of the new millennium, the HMIC report 'Policing a New Century: A Blueprint for Reform' (HMIC, 2001a) concluded that public reassurance must be a central aim of policing due to the directly positive relationship between public confidence and levels of information sharing and giving evidence. However, it wasn't until the identification of a 'reassurance gap' amongst the public – 'the difficulty in reconciling falling crime levels with rising public anxiety about safety' (HMIC, 2001b, 16) - and the emergence of reassurance policing that the relationship between the public and the English bobby was reinvigorated within the policing agenda. Additional pressure was exerted from a corresponding report 'Open All Hours' (HMIC, 2001b) that sought to identify the importance of adopting a visible, accessible and community focused policing style that would encourage familiarity with the public. A critical aspect of the report was the assertion that achieving reassurance was not simply about police presence but rather stems from the style of policing adopted;

> "A police car speeding past with lights flashing and sirens blaring signals trouble. The feel-good factor comes instead from officers who are known and accessible – preferably on foot patrol – and who are skilled at engaging with local communities and their problems", (HMIC, 2001b, viv).

Given the limited capacity of police officers to provide visible patrol (Audit Commission, 1996) the government needed to find new mechanisms through which visibility and engagement could be achieved. Concerned that the pluralisation of policing would lead to the Balkanisation of policing due to the capacity of local authorities to set up their own police forces, the Former Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Force, Sir Ian Blair, made the bold decision to increase police visibility and thus regain police control over neighbourhoods via the introduction of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) through the Police Reform Act 2002 (Blair, 2002). Identifying their introduction as a "revolution in British policing" (ibid: 23), PCSOs provided an opportunity to 'open out' the police mandate beyond crime-fighting (Innes, 2004) and reinstate the patrol function within the remit and control of the

public police (Crawford and Lister 2004a, Johnstone, 2007). PCSOs could not only be utilised as a commodity to enable the police to compete with commercial and municipal providers within an ever-expanding security market, but their membership within the police organisation would mean that they would have a significant reassurance advantage over their rivals (Crawford, 2007; 152).

Diversifying policing – locating PCSOs within the extended police family

The introduction of PCSOs provides a significant contribution in further diversifying networks of policing and adding to an already established mixed economy of policing involving private security personnel, neighbourhood wardens and special constables (Crawford et al, 2005). In a recent attempt to categorise the wide range of personnel and organisations engaged in policing, Loader (2000) identifies five distinct modes under which policing is provided. Using Loader's model, and whilst recognising that categories can be porous and overlap, PCSOs and Special Constables might be considered 'policing through government', private security personnel constitute 'policing beyond government', whereas neighbourhood wardens deliver 'policing below government'. Whilst both private security personnel and neighbourhood wardens can be deployed as a means of providing uniformed patrol, they differ from PCSOs in terms of their role and remit, source of funding, powers and the relationship between provider and the public (Jones and Newburn, 1998).

Private security personnel perform a central role in the policing of mass private property and the provision of security patrols within areas where public access is restricted, but are also increasingly deployed to provide security within areas of open private space such as shopping centres, leisure complexes, airports and industrial estates. The size of the private security industry is difficult to determine due to a lack of official data but according to Wakefield (2003) of all of the multitude of agencies involved in policing in England and Wales only the private security industry rivals the police in its size and territorial scope. In 2000, George and Button (2000, in

Button, 2002) estimated that there were 217,000 private security personnel employed within the sector with a direct policing function. This equates to 1.4 security officers to every police officer in England and Wales. Private security personnel do share similar aims held by the police; the majority of private security activities are concerned with crime prevention, are active in supporting policing in bringing offenders to justice either through the use of CCTV and apprehending customers and staff for theft, and perhaps more relevant to PCSOs, are involved in protecting and reassuring those who pay for their services. Most relevant is the role played by the security market in driving the provision of public reassurance and in responding to burgeoning public demands for security (Crawford, 2007).

Neighbourhood wardens, like PCSOs, have a primary role of tackling fear of crime and anti-social behaviour through the provision of uniformed patrol. Operating within discrete areas, wardens are typically engaged in crime prevention activities such as facilitating neighbourhood watch schemes and diversion activities for young people, but typically have a much broader remit to PCSOs; their principal aim is improving quality of life within target communities as part of the governmental agenda of neighbourhood renewal (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998). Their functions therefore typically incorporate housing management, environmental improvements and efforts towards community development (Jacobson and Saville, 1999) to support social inclusion. Warden schemes are typically managed by housing authorities or local authorities, but it is not uncommon for a wide range of other stakeholders including various funding bodies, residents associations, specialist housing bodies to be involved in the planning and implementation of schemes. In 2001, the government introduced a street warden programme. Although similar to neighbourhood wardens, greater emphasis was placed upon improving the appearance of town centres and instilling civic pride. An additional variation was also introduced in September 2002 in the form of street crime wardens. Operating within ten police forces with highest levels of street crime, street wardens are intended to patrol high crime areas, support crime prevention and support long term regeneration (Crawford and Lister, 2004b).

Private security officers are funded through the payment of fees by service users to the providing organisation for their services. They may be managed by a non-state commercial organisation or take the form of contracted-out personnel from the state. Prior to the government's national strategy for neighbourhood renewal, neighbourhood warden schemes were typically funded secured through local authority funding, regenerative funding streams such as the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) and New Deal for Communities (NDC) funding, housing associations, or in some cases, particularly those with environmental functions, were funded through service charges from tenants (Jacobson and Saville, 1999). Schemes became centrally funded and co-ordinated through the launch of the neighbourhood warden programme in 2000 and the Street Crime Initiative in 2002. The cost of various warden programmes has since been transferred onto local authorities leading to greater instability and uncertainty regarding their future, particularly in the current climate of public service cuts.

Despite their shared remit for high visibility patrols, the powers bestowed upon private security personnel and neighbourhood wardens as accredited officers are more limited than those available to PCSOs as designated civilians. Neither private security personnel nor neighbourhood wardens have the power to detain or use reasonable force but they have been granted the authority to issue fixed penalty notices, to require the giving of a name and address, to confiscate alcohol and tobacco and to remove abandoned vehicles under provisions contained within section 41 of the Police Reform Act 2002.

Public and private forms of policing also differ with regards to the relationship between provider and public. Jones and Newburn (1998) explain that within private policing arrangements the relationship between provider and the public is based on contracts and competition, whereas within public relationships there is often a monopoly of supply leading to more universal deployment of provision. Where private security personnel conduct security patrols, they are less likely to patrol deprived areas due to the reduced capacity of residents to pay for security and reassurance, leading to inequality in provision. Despite the increased regulation provided by the

Security Industry Act in 2001 and the subsequent establishment of the Private Industry Authority, the potential for commercial providers of security to utilise enforced compliance in the form of 'protection rackets' and act in line with commercial interests rather than those of local communities is likely to remain. However, findings from Noaks' (2000) study of a commercial company providing residential patrols suggests that, like wardens (Jacobson and Saville, 1999), and PCSOs (Cooper et al, 2006), private sector policing can not only have a positive impact on community safety but can help build community cohesion within target communities.

Special constables share the closest resemblance to PCSOs due to their shared membership within the police organisation and their significant role in the civilianisation of public policing. They represent the 'active community volunteer' (Gill and Mawby, 1990) and provide an important part of the extended police family. Despite their civilian status, special constables occupy a position in the organisation that is distinct from PCSOs due to their wider remit and greater role variation. As fully warranted police officers undertaking similar operational roles to regular police officers, special constables, like PCSOs and neighbourhood wardens, conduct uniformed foot patrols, but like police constables they are more likely to be abstracted to other duties, including mobile patrol, policing special events and traffic duties, due to their wider remit and powers. As volunteers, special constables have a long tradition within policing becoming implemented upon the formation of the professional police in 1829. Whilst numbers of special constables reached their peak in the mid 1960s at 43,000, they steadily declined to only 16,000 by the late 1980s (Gaston and Alexander, 2001), and remained fairly constant at 15,505 in March 2010 (Sigurdsson and Dhani, 2010). However, the attraction of special constables is likely to become more pronounced within the current climate of austerity measures within public spending. Where many forces are currently involved in major recruitment drives for special constables, recruitment of police officers and PCSOs has frozen across all forces. Given observations made by Gill and Mawby (1990) with regards to tension between specials and full time police officers and questions made by the latter concerning the motives,

competence and commitment of the former, there is a danger however that increasing numbers of special constables whilst concurrently seeking efficiency measures might awaken or intensify feelings of conflict already held by full-time police officers.

The Emergence and Consolidation of PCSOs

In 2003, PCSOs were firmly placed on the policing agenda within the first National Policing Plan (Home Office, 2002) as it announced the introduction of twelve hundred PCSOs to provide presence, reassurance and increase orderliness in public places. At the end of April 2007, there were 16,000 PCSOs operating within the 43 forces in England and Wales (Bullock and Gunning, 2007), set to rise to 24,000 by 2010, (Clegg and Kirwan, 2006). According to the then Home Secretary, Charles Clarke, this equated to "36 million hours a year out in communities to help reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and reassure the public" (Home Office, 2005; 2). The introduction of PCSOs can be seen as forming a part of organisational change in the move to an extended police family (Crawford, 2003, Johnston, 2003, Crawford et al, 2005) to satisfy public demand for police visibility and security. However, as dedicated non-confrontational patrol officers, PCSOs differ in many respects from their sworn officer counterparts. Before going on to explore the reactions from within the police force to this new development in policing, this section will outline the key differences between PCSOs and sworn police officers in relation to role and powers, recruitment and conditions of employment, training and career development and uniform and equipment.

The primary role of PCSOs is to provide high visibility patrol, tackle disorder and anti-social behaviour and provide reassurance to local communities. Guidance provided by ACPO (2002) regarding the deployment of PCSOs clearly differentiated the distinct role of PCSOs from that of police constables asserting "PCSOs are not substitutes for police officers....PCSOs have a distinct role, which avoids high risk activity and places no duty on

them to engage in levels of risk beyond their basic training" (ibid. 6). That is, PCSOs should not expect to engage in any activity where there is a likelihood for confrontation or risk to their safety, where there is scope for a high level of discretion to be used, or where there is a likelihood that intervention will require significant further work or investigation. Despite recognising that the specific emphasis of the PCSO role and powers to fulfil it will vary between forces and specific neighbourhoods, ACPO also stipulate that PCSOs should not be abstracted to conduct duties that take them away from their target areas unless it meets the requirements of their primary role of reassurance (ibid).

There is however substantial variation in the ways in which PCSOs have been utilised between forces. Whilst recent research by the NPIA suggest that PCSOs are undertaking this same core role as outlined by ACPO, the operational freedom granted to forces has meant that PCSOs have also been utilised to perform roles that divert them away from such guidance (NPIA, 2008). Whilst a degree of abstraction from patrol is to be expected, even encouraged, to enable PCSOs to directly support neighbourhood policing teams, NPIA (2008) made clear in their review of PCSOs the acceptable and unacceptable variations within the PCSO role. Acceptable variations within the role include the deployment of PCSOs within safer transport schemes and support and partnership teams, whilst unacceptable variations include the deployment of PCSOs as detention officers, as support staff for the purposes of offender management or within liquor or firearms licensing. NPIA (ibid) considered these latter variations to fall outside the core role due to their lack of involvement within neighbourhood police teams. Variation also occurs in the manner in which PCSOs conduct patrols; some forces allow PCSOs to drive marked vehicles particularly when assigned to manage traffic or when operating within rural communities, although PCSOs most commonly use marked cycles to enhance their mobility within target areas.

At the time of their introduction, the specific powers of enforcement granted to PCSOs (as outlined under Section 38 of the 2002 Police Reform Act) were designated at the discretion of the chief constable of each force as

a means of granting operational flexibility in their deployment. Forces subsequently varied considerably in the powers they chose to assign to PCSOs whereby those selected depended on perceived operational needs and senior officers' varying interpretations of the PCSO role. Survey findings from Cooper et al (2006) report that most forces delegated between 14 and 28 powers to their PCSOs from over 40 that were available, with 90% of forces designating powers to confiscate alcohol and tobacco from those under age, the power of entry to save life and limb, the power to request a name and address from a person acting in an anti-social manner and the power to issue fixed penalty notices to their PCSOs. Since their introduction, the powers available to PCSOs have increased through provisions within the 2003 Anti-Social Behaviour Act, the 2005 Serious and Organised Crime Act and the 2005 Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act. Following demands for greater consistency across forces and to help clarify the situations and issues that PCSOs can be expected to deal with, a standardised set of twenty powers were introduced for all PCSOs in December 2007 (NPIA, 2008). However, there also an additional 33 powers that may be assigned if required, including the power to detain, the power to use reasonable force in relation to a detained person, the power to enforce certain licensing offences and the power to search people for dangerous items. Whilst the power to detain was originally only accorded to six forces as part of a pilot study (Singer, 2004) and has since become available to all forces, only 15 out of 43 forces have made the decision to designate the power of detention to their PCSOs. In July 2008, there were 53 powers that could be designated to PCSOs (NPIA, 2008).

Each police force was given responsibility for the recruitment of PCSOs when first introduced following the 2002 Police Reform Act. There is evidence to suggest that recruitment during the initial rounds was somewhat hastily implemented due to tight implementation timescales (Dolman and Francis, 2006, Cooper et al, 2006, Johnston, 2007). Forces were expected to construct job and person specifications and integrated competency frameworks (ICFs) for their PCSOs and respective police authorities were responsible for setting the terms and conditions under which PCSOs would

be employed. In order to ensure consistency in recruiting standards, the Home Office introduced a national selection process for PCSOs in April 2006 including the introduction of a national application form, defined national standards and assessment centres (NPIA, 2008).

The autonomy given to individual forces and police authorities invariably also produced significant variation across forces with regards to PCSO salaries and conditions. Of the 33 forces included within the National Evaluation of PCSOs in 2006, the minimum pay scale for PCSOs ranged from £14,094 to £19,626, with almost 40% of forces offering a basic salary of £15, 732 (Cooper et al, 2006) and a maximum pay scale of between £15, 408 and £25,356. Whilst PCSOs can secure increments in their basic salary with service, this compares favourably when compared with the national starting salary of £19, 803 for police constables, or £22,107 on completion of their training (ibid). As a result of a lack of certainty surrounding funding, some forces have chosen to employ PCSOs on fixed term contracts, typically for a period of two years or less. As recognised by Cooper et al (2006), the use of short term contracts can significantly undermine PCSO morale and limit levels of retention. Funding provided via the Neighbourhood Policing Grant that provided 100% of salary costs of PCSOs in the first year of recruitment and 75% of costs in the second was instrumental in supporting the expansion of PCSOs across forces. In relation to membership of professional bodies and political activism, PCSOs are prevented from becoming members of the police federation as a result of their civilian status. They are however able to secure representation through membership of trade unions which in prohibited for sworn police officers.

Variation can also be found in the level of training PCSOs receive within their respective forces. With limited time in which to build a national training model prior to their recruitment, the majority of forces provided induction training to PCSOs internally, typically lasting from between ten and thirty days depending on financial constraints and limited legal powers exercised by PCSOs within each force (Cooper et al, 2006, Johnston, 2007). The extent of training received by PCSOs prior to their deployment therefore stands in stark contrast with the 31 weeks of standard training for a police

constable (HMIC, 2002b). As with recruitment, concerns over inconsistency has led to the introduction of a national training programme for PCSOs and a recommendation by the National Police Improvements Agency (NPIA) (2008) that forces should ensure PCSOs receive ongoing or refresher training, particularly with regards to community engagement and problem solving (ibid, 2008). Unlike sworn police officers who are able to advance both vertically and laterally throughout the organisation, PCSOs have limited opportunities for career development and/or progression. Despite plans to develop qualifications for PCSOs to support skill development, a high proportion of PCSOs perceive career progression as constituting progression into the police force rather than into alternative police staff roles, potentially presenting considerable challenges with regards to morale, stability within the role and continuity within local communities.

PCSOs wear similar uniforms to those worn by police officers in order for the public to recognise them as police staff rather than mistake them as local authority or private security personnel. Whilst some variation has again occurred across forces, all PCSOs are expected to wear a blue (rather than black as worn by police officers) hat band, blue epaulettes and tie, and a reflective jacket printed with 'police community support officer' or 'community support officer'. Despite the different colour of these items, PCSOs, like police officers, wear a black uniform and white shirt and bear a striking resemblance to sworn police officers, particularly when working in the dark or when seen at a distance by members of the public. Clearly, misidentification has potential deterrent benefits, but might also serve to heighten public expectations, confuse the public or even place PCSOs at danger (Cooper et al, 2006, Dolman and Francis, 2006). PCSOs are however more easily distinguished from police officers by the lack of personal protective equipment they possess. With the exception of PCSOs working within North Wales or within the British Transport Police who are equipped with handcuffs to assist them when utilising the power to detain, PCSOs do not carry handcuffs, batons or incapacitant spray. Protective vests, a mobile telephone, a torch, first aid equipment, police radio are standard issue equipment for PCSOs. Some PCSOs working within neighbourhood police

teams might carry additional equipment for the purposes of intelligence gathering and communication, for example, head cameras and/or hand held digital cameras or local shopwatch or pubwatch radios.

Whilst recent activity based costing (ABC) analysis conducted across all 42 forces in England and Wales suggests that visible patrol accounted for two-thirds of PCSO time in two thirds of all police forces (Mason and Dale, 2008), a rate considerably higher than that spent by uniformed police officers (17% - Home Office, 2001), PCSOs are nonetheless being abstracted from visible patrol by bureaucratic requirements such as training and briefings, and by special operations (Mason and Dale, 2008). An important aspect to the introduction of PCSOs as dedicated patrol officers is the non-confrontational aspect of their role. As aforementioned, PCSOs do not have the same training, powers or equipment to respond to incidents where there is a likelihood for confrontation and therefore can only be expected to respond to incidents where this risk is absent. Whilst the notion of PCSOs performing a complimentary role is sound in principle, increasing demands combined with limited resources may lead to 'mission creep' and to PCSOs attending incidents and performing tasks other than those originally intended.

The Police Federation have voiced sustained objections to the introduction of PCSOs, criticising PCSOs as a cheap form of policing serving to deceive the public. Indeed, the increasing global civilianisation of police tasks has not only produced civilian roles that have typically been related to non-enforcement (Bayley, 1994), but have not required regular contact with 'customers' or the general public. PCSOs therefore offer a new civilian role, with additional responsibility for service delivery but with limited ability to enforce and therefore an increased potential for loss of legitimacy and conflict. Caless (2007; 187) acknowledges the Federation's reaction and the subsequent wider disaffection amongst the media and public in response to the introduction of PCSOs stating;

> "since their inception PCSOs have been the target for unremitting criticism, ranging from their replacement of 'real' police officers, to

> their not being trained sufficiently to properly patrol neighbourhoods, to their having insufficient powers to compel compliance".

Certainly, Cooper et al, (2006; 26) refer to survey findings conducted with PCSOs revealing that many PCSOs across the country have encountered situations where they felt vulnerable due to their limited powers and training. Cooper et al (ibid, ix) conclude that "a large minority had experienced some level of physical abuse and most had experienced verbal abuse".

The relatively recent publication of two Green Papers by the government, 'From the Neighbourhood to the National: Policing Our Communities Together' (Home Office, 2008) and 'Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime' (Casey, 2008), defend the PCSO role in light of such negative attention and argue that PCSOs have an important role within neighbourhood policing. The former notes:

> "First and foremost we need to be clear about the core PCSO role and how that complements but does not replace police constables. We have always maintained that PCSOs have a distinct and separate role, based on high visibility patrol, reassurance, community engagement and problem solving, which allows them to support police constables who rightly have the more wide ranging coercive powers" (Home Office, 2008; 17).

Despite opposition from the Police Federation, the recent PCSO review by the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) (NPIA, 2008) argues that there is widespread support within forces for the current ACPO policy on the role of PCSOs. However, the report also acknowledges the continuing emphasis upon local flexibility and calls by forces for their deployment in areas categorised as 'quality of life' issues supporting their involvement in recording minor crimes, involvement in writing victim statements and attending low level incidents. Whilst such developments provide potential benefits for the career development of PCSOs, they also have the potential to divert them further away from reassurance and towards crime control objectives of the wider organisation. Indeed, in the Home Office's recent 'Safe and Confident Neighbourhoods Strategy' (Home Office,

2010) the NPIA announced its intention to develop both a professional career pathway for those working within neighbourhood police teams and a PCSO accreditation structure designed to "assist career PCSOs and support those wishing to become police officers to make the move swiftly" (ibid, 14). The government therefore appears to be providing a contradictory message; on the one hand they are keen to promote the value of neighbourhood policing, of which PCSOs are identified as an essential component, whilst on the other, they are placing greater value on the role of the police officer.

Whilst this development is likely to be welcomed by PCSOs seeking to become police officers (Cooper et al, 2006) and has the potential to improve the status of neighbourhood policing as a career path there are significant risks. Firstly, increasing the entry of PCSOs into the police force is inimical to the provision of continuity and the maintenance of relations within target communities. Secondly, in emphasising the desirability of progression into the police force it is equally possible that the PCSO role will be devalued having a negative impact upon PCSO integration. As illustrated by Reiner (2000) with regards to the downgrading of the patrol function in favour of specialisation, there is the potential for those PCSOs who do not wish to or fail to become police officers to be seen as either lacking in ambition or incompetent.

Research to date in relation to PCSOs has been either evaluative focusing on their impact (Cooper et al, 2006) or research oriented around their wider contribution to issues of equality and diversity (Johnston, 2006). The National Evaluation of PCSOs by the Home Office (Cooper et al, 2006) examined the process of implementation within forces and the impact PCSOs have had on local communities. In relation to their implementation, PCSOs were generally happy with their job, but expressed concerns about career progression, with many perceiving the role as a 'stepping stone' to the police. At the time of the evaluation, there was great variation in organisational structures with many PCSOs working away from community policing teams, often working in isolation due to different shift patterns, therefore raising issues in relation to co-ordination and resource use. However, evidence from two of the three case study areas selected for more

qualitative work suggested PCSOs are well known by the public, and residents and businesses within these areas felt PCSOs had made a positive impact on youth disorder.

However, the evaluation does identify three significant limitations. Firstly, no discernible impact was observed in relation to PCSO impact on crime trends before or after their introduction, although this may be the result of data limitations, for example, incidents typically dealt with by PCSOs may not be identified as crimes. Secondly, the report highlighted confusion amongst members of the public in relation to the PCSO role and capabilities, and many of those who were aware of their remit, expressed a strong preference for fully sworn officers on patrol instead. Research conducted by Johnston (2006) within the Metropolitan Police asserts that the political motivations for the speedy implementation of PCSOs in London, (as possibly within other forces) negatively impacted on the capacity of the force to effectively recruit, manage and integrate PCSOs into the organisation. A third and perhaps most alarming issue relates to PCSO visibility. Whilst Cooper et al's (2006) wider analysis suggests PCSOs were fulfilling their intended role, more detailed case study analysis within three select forces identifies that PCSOs were only spending up to 57% of their time on patrol and community involvement compared to between 16% and 30% for their neighbourhood police counterparts. Perhaps more alarming, this equates to up to a third of their remaining time being spent on refreshments, briefings and activities within the station (Cooper et al 2006; 9).

Three more independent pieces of evaluation; Johnston's (2006) work in the Metropolitan Police, Crawford et al's (2004) work in West Yorkshire Police and Chatterton and Rowland's (2005) research on behalf of the Police Federation, have lead to key questions being raised in relation to the deployment of PCSOs. The first issue relates to the multitude of ways in which the role and functions of PCSOs have been operationalised. Crawford et al (2004) identify that the PCSO role encompasses a range of functions aside from the patrol function, including intelligence and information gathering, crime prevention and problem solving and a linking and referral function to other agencies and local services involved in community safety,

reiterating their multiple benefits to local policing and the inaccuracy in defining their role as visibility. Chatterton and Rowland (2005; 3) in examining role perceptions of serving officers across eight forces in England and Wales, assert;

> "there is no such thing as a typical [P]CSO. The picture that emerges is one of wide variations, both inter and intra force, in training, shift patterns, roles and deployment".

The second emerging issue relates to PCSO powers of enforcement and methods of compliance. Crawford et al (2004) recognise that importance of negotiation and persuasion in inducing compliance but assert that increasing available powers of enforcement risks leading to the less frequent use of non-coercive techniques. Johnston (2006, 30) follows this line of inquiry supporting the notion that the potential for PCSOs to engage in 'harder' forms of policing is a present risk in stating, "the prospect that the deployment of PCSOs might facilitate and encourage less-confrontational forms of street compliance are already being undermined by public policy". The importance, in support of non-adversarial policing between PCSOs and local communities, is therefore in limiting their law enforcement functions in favour of activities that emphasise community engagement. If this emphasis is not made, there is a very real possibility, due to the strength of government and force policy and increasing pressures on the police in the light of restricted resources, that a transmogrified, counterproductive PCSO role that is no longer focused on reassurance will emerge and prevail. The importance of ensuring PCSOs remain distinct from the role of the police officer is heightened if they are to avoid falling prey to being used as a generic resource. However, it is simultaneously also important that efforts are made to support PCSOs in becoming an integrated member of the organisation through clear communication across rank and deployment to foster understanding of their role and limitations upon practice.

In light of concerns regarding increasing enforcement powers being granted to PCSOs and the potential of adverse effects on PCSOs and the community, the Home Office commissioned an evaluation to explore the

power to detain granted to PCSOs via the Police Reform Act (2002). The power to detain may be utilised where a PCSO believes a person is culpable of committing an offence and subsequently requires that person to provide their name and address. Where the person concerned refuses to comply and provide such details of if the PCSO suspects details given are false, the PCSO may "require the person to wait with them for up to thirty minutes up to the arrival of a constable" (Police Reform Act 2002: Schedule 4, part1, 196). In consideration of survey results from participating PCSOs in the six forces that had bestowed such powers on PCSOs during 2003/04, the evaluation concluded, "The evidence collected and analysed in this evaluation indicates the absence of any adverse effect on either the [P]CSO or the detainee when the power to detain is exercised" (Singer, 2004; 9). Nonetheless, one third of respondents (151 PCSOs) did report experiences of verbal and physical abuse from parties who had been detained, even though in the majority of cases this was more likely to have involved verbal abuse (61%), (Singer, 2004; 6). However, what the evaluation fails to determine are the outcomes of cases where a detention has occurred. What is not clear is whether detentions resulted in charges being brought against them or otherwise, therefore making it difficult to assess whether the power was being appropriately used and the accuracy of PCSO levels of judgement, or whether the power is a useful addition to a PCSO's armoury.

Reassurance Policing

Drawing upon the success of CAPS in Chicago and Wilson and Kelling's (1982), 'Broken Window' hypothesis, reassurance policing was initially piloted in eight police forces across England and Wales by the Home Office as part of the Home Office's National Reassurance Policing Programme (NRPP) in 2003 in a bid to fill the 'reassurance gap' (HMIC, 2001b). PCSOs were identified as an integral component to the successful implementation and delivery of reassurance policing from the outset (Home Office, 2006). Direction for tackling issues of lower level disorder had

previously been sought under problem oriented approaches and Wilson and Kelling's 'Broken Window' hypothesis (1982) that suggest a causal cycle between incivility, disorder, neighbourhood decline and crime. Wilson and Kelling's hypothesis explains a process of decline whereby a broken window becomes 'one too many' and signals to potential law breakers that the neighbourhood does not care, subsequently leading to further disorder. They conclude;

> "serious street crime flourishes in areas in which disorderly behaviour goes unchecked. The unchecked panhandler is in effect the first broken window...If the neighbourhood cannot keep a bothersome panhandler from annoying passers-by, the thief may reason, it is even less likely to call the police to identify a potential mugger or to interfere if a mugging takes place", (Wilson and Kelling, 1982; 34 in Dunham and Alpert, 2001; 472).

The rationale is that once disorder increases residents subsequently retreat into their homes, take no responsibility for what goes on in public spaces and levels of informal social control are lost.

Despite widespread support for the broken windows theory as a panacea against disorder and the associated development of the more aggressive zero tolerance approach (Kelling and Coles, 1996, Greene, 1999, Golub et al, 2003, Blair, 2007), the Signal Crime Perspective rejects a direct link between disorder and crime. Drawing upon the work of Taub et al's (1984, in Innes and Fielding, 2002) work in Chicago and Sampson and Raudenbusch's (1997, 1999) emphasis upon collective efficacy, Innes and Fielding (2002) argue that crime levels might be an issue in judging the quality of an area, but such judgements are comparative rather than absolute; residents may judge the risk of crime to be above average whilst being satisfied with the level of safety in the neighbourhood.

Reassurance policing focuses on crime and disorder signals of concern and fear rather than on problems thereby taking away police monopoly for definition of local problems as risked in problem solving approaches. PCSOs clearly have a prominent role to play in both providing

visibility and identifying crime and disorder signals amongst the public. Innes (2004, 2005) identifies three key aspects of the Signal Crime Perspective. First, he argues that individuals construct perceptions of security and insecurity around certain key incidents (Innes, 2005; 192) and these key incidents function as warning signals about the presence of risk and insecurity (Millie and Herrington, 2005). Identified signals function to widen "the police's radar in terms of the range of problems they are required to attend to in their efforts to shape neighbourhood security", (Innes, 2007; 138). Second, in contrast to Wilson and Kelling (1982), Innes (ibid) suggests that whilst crime and disorder are functionally equivalent they are not causally linked. A third principle poses that crime or disorder signals can be targeted and countered by control signals initiated by police and other agencies responsible for crime control and public safety.

An evaluation of the NRPP (Tuffin et al, 2006), drawing upon police statistics, baseline and follow up surveys with residents from each of the six sites, observed positive impacts of reassurance policing on crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour, feelings of safety, confidence and satisfaction with policing when compared to controls, although it did not rigorously test the signal crimes perspective. According to Singer (2004), early research concerning the move towards reassurance policing had a tendency to focus on definition, rather than how to deliver reassurance. Millie and Herrington (2005) identify widespread variation in opinion as to how reassurance might be put into practice. In consultation with stakeholders from police and partner agencies working in the NRPP pilot sites, they discuss officer perceptions and identify a number of challenges to successful implementation including the potential failure to link up visibility with meaningful community contact and to publicise their presence, limited trust between police and targeted communities, and building good relations with media in order to advertise crime fighting successes (Millie and Herrington, 2005; 8). There is also potential for identified 'signals' to clash with performance indicators, particularly where there is a lack of integration throughout the organisation, and as a result, the likelihood that particular signals, particularly those relating to performance indicators, will take precedence over others. Millie

and Herrington (2006) argue that barriers to the implementation of community policing, particularly abstractions of officers, staff turnover and training are also relevant to reassurance policing. Findings suggest that reassurance has remained an add-on and police roles had changed little (Millie and Herrington, 2006). This lack of integration raises further questions with regards to the integration of PCSOs. Championed for their inability to be abstracted to other police duties due to their limited role, this begs the question whether they too will ultimately be assigned to the sidelines of core policing practice.

Is it not therefore pertinent, as suggested by Millie and Herrington (2005) to ask whether reassurance policing is simply old wine in new bottles? Like community oriented policing, reassurance policing has quickly become a catch all category encompassing public engagement, public satisfaction with and confidence in policing. Indeed, Wakefield (2007; 346) recognises that reassurance policing has now become subsumed into 'citizen-focused' policing used to refer to the local deployment of dedicated teams of personnel through the most recent Home Office discourse of 'Neighbourhood Policing'. It seems that the old philosophies and ideas as advocated by community policing are simply being 'repackaged' under a new brand as part of another attempt to increase police legitimacy.

Neighbourhood Policing

The national Neighbourhood Policing Programme (NPP) was launched in April 2005 supported by pilots undertaken through the NRPP between October 2003 and March 2005. According to Quinton and Morris, (2008, iv), the NRPP and the NPP share a similar purpose, "police visibility, community involvement in identifying local priorities, and collaborative problem solving with partners and the public to tackle those priorities". Neighbourhood policing was developed in order to provide greater commonality to a range of responses and concerns in relation to crime reduction, fear of crime and quality of life, promoted by a wealth of police reforms, including reassurance policing, citizen focused policing, community

cohesion, pluralisation and the growing emphasis on anti-social behaviour. 3,600 neighbourhood policing teams have now been implemented within every force in England and Wales (ibid). Typically teams include neighbourhood beat managers and PCSOs, working in collaboration with special constables and community wardens (www.neighbourhoodpolicing.co.uk), and government have strived to emphasise the importance of continuity for the development of trust and familiarity.

Whilst recognising resonances between the two models, Innes (2006; 97), conversely contextualises the shift from reassurance policing to neighbourhood policing in terms of the concept of 'community' and associated difficulties in definition. He asserts, "The shift to a territorial referent of the 'neighbourhood' gives a more stable view as to what the focus of policing should be" (ibid, 97), by identifying neighbourhood as the signifier, emphasis is placed on localism. However, individual notions of geographical space and place and perceptions of what constitutes the domain of a 'neighbourhood' remains a subjective concept. Differences in approach of each model are perceived by Innes (2006) as due to variations in scope and overarching aims. Reassurance policing was explicitly designed to deliver the public good of reassurance whereas neighbourhood policing is a more generalist approach defined by the local delivery of police services.

Whereas previous reform efforts in the 1990s focused on enforcement and crime control in the war against crime through zero tolerance, intelligence led policing and the roll out of the National Intelligence Model (NIM), neighbourhood policing sees crime control as only one facet in the police's wider remit of order maintenance and security, and in so doing gives focus to more 'softer' policing utilising a more persuasive approach to control. Innes (2005; 157) identifies soft policing as "the non-coercive aspects of police-led social control encompassing the provision of a visible presence of authority, persuasion, negotiation and community interaction", thereby providing, in relation to PCSOs, an additional philosophy of working than that postulated by reassurance policing. Nonetheless, as attested by Fielding and Innes (2006) and previous commentators on community policing

(Brogden and Nijhar, 1997, Morgan and Newburn, 1997, Greene, 2000) ‘soft’ policing is ‘hard’ for the police to deliver. Aside from the burgeoning contrasting emphasis placed on performance by central government as measured by BVPIs, inhibitors to the delivery of ‘softer’ policing are likely to be found within aspects of the dominant police occupational culture, ingrained habits of enforcement and traditional crime fighting methods and above all the difficulty of measuring effectiveness of possible outcomes provided by a ‘softer’ style of policing.

Indeed, assessment of the early implementation of the NPP (Quinton and Morris, 2008, Mason, 2009), report inconclusive results in terms of impact upon outcome measures, including public confidence, victim satisfaction and perceptions of problem solving, at both Basic Command Unit (BCU) and Police Force Area (PFA) levels. Recognising that the size and scope of the programme at this stage in its implementation is unlikely to yield widespread improvement, authors of both reports note that the potential rewards of the government’s more recent police reform effort is presently unknown.

Summary

This chapter has explored the emergence and development of policing models designed to improve public engagement and public confidence, tackle fear of crime and increase police legitimacy. Whilst these models been widely adopted in both the United States and the United Kingdom, their impact upon crime, fear of crime and public satisfaction is mixed and many have suffered from implementation failure with very few achieving the level of organisational and occupational reform needed to affect real change (Goldstein, 1987, Chan, 1996). Instead, due to their inconsistent impact upon crime and experimental nature, such initiatives tend to be short-lived remaining on the periphery of policing provision and attracting a subsidiary status to traditional reactive strategies and crime control. Organisational pressures of performance indicators and crime management have meant that where officers are allocated to community

policing efforts they frequently become abstracted by reactive responsibilities.

The introduction of PCSOs by the Police Reform Act 2002 as a civilianised non-confrontational tier of policing was intended to avoid such pressures. Unlike their sworn officer colleagues, PCSOs have a restricted role in order to enable them to dedicate their time to patrol and community engagement and to avoid being abstracted to crime control activities. However, despite their clear connection to the principles of community and reassurance policing, their recent implementation under neighbourhood policing and efforts to distinguish the PCSO role from police officers (Home Office, 2008, Home Office, 2010) there is a clear potential for 'mission creep' within the PCSO role. Indeed, the National Evaluation of PCSOs (Cooper et al, 2006) and recent activity based costing analysis (Mason and Dale, 2008) demonstrate that PCSOs are already spending one third of their time away from the community and independent research on the deployment and operation of PCSOs have highlighted wide variation in their deployment and an increasing pressure for PCSOs to engage in more confrontational forms of police work (Crawford et al, 2004, Johnston, 2006). As police forces face increasing pressure to meet performance targets with limited resources, it is likely they will use their operational autonomy to look towards more innovative means of utilising PCSOs beyond their primary role of visibility and reassurance to better serve the crime control objectives of the organisation.

Chapter 2 - Occupational Socialisation and the Craft of Policing

Introduction

PCSOs have a unique role to play in the delivery of local policing. Their remit for public reassurance and tackling lower level crime and disorder leads to spending the vast proportion of their time patrolling local communities and engaging with the public as representatives of the police organisation. Despite holding such responsibility, they rarely have any previous experience of policing and are provided with very limited training or guidance with regards to the delivery of reassurance or the management of conflict prior to deployment. In spite of their differential role and civilian status, PCSOs, like all members of the police family, are nonetheless socialised into the organisation, its hierarchy and objectives, and are expected to endorse the collective meanings and accepted working practices inherent within the occupational culture.

In the absence of research concerning the socialisation experience of PCSOs or the process through which PCSOs acquire the necessary skills of policing and reassurance, this chapter explores current literature on the socialisation process as experienced by police officers and their accumulation of 'craft' skills and associated competencies of policing with a view to gaining insight into the process through which PCSOs might effectively deliver reassurance and maintain order. The chapter is structured into five sections. It begins by first examining the literature regarding the socialisation process of police officers within the police organisation. In recognition of the widespread discretion involved in police work, the second section explores the relationship between rules and police action. This is followed by a discussion concerning the emphasis upon experiential learning within police work and the associated craft of policing. Building upon notions of craft, the fourth section explores notions of competence in police work and evidence surrounding 'what makes a good police officer'. The chapter concludes by considering both the significance of these competencies to the

PCSO role and the relevance of legitimacy and procedural justice to compliance and maintaining order.

The Socialisation of the Police Officer

On entering the police organisation, PCSOs are required to attend a five week training course to introduce them to the administrative and practical skills needed to conduct their role in local communities. Administratively, the course seeks to introduce PCSOs to the organisation, associated policies and regulations, and to communicate role expectations and duties. Practical aspects of training involve acquainting PCSOs with the equipment and technology they are likely to use and the management of information and intelligence gathered from local communities in the course of conducting their duties. PCSO induction training offered by police forces has evolved since their introduction following the Police Reform Act 2002 as knowledge and expectations of the role has developed and as greater powers have been made available to them. Although there is variation between forces, PCSOs appointed by the force involved in the current study have received induction training designed to assist them in community engagement, particularly with young people, and in the execution of powers associated with antisocial, including the confiscation of alcohol and use of fixed penalty notices for disorder. Whilst improvements are being made to provide PCSOs with regular training deemed relevant to the role, practical training remains secondary to administrative training designed to prepare recruits for their introduction into the organisation. The locus for learning how to deliver reassurance lies within accumulated experiences on the street.

Emphasis on experiential learning over classroom learning within PCSO training corresponds with previous literature on police officer training and socialisation (Van Maanen, 1973, Hopper, 19977, Fielding, 1988, Chan 2001, Chan et al, 2003). As described by Van Maanen (1973; 410),

> “the majority of class time is filled by departmental personnel describing the more mundane features of the occupation. To a large

> degree, the formal academy may be viewed as a didactic sort of instrumentally oriented ritual passage rite".

Indeed, 30% of respondents engaged in Fielding's study of officer socialisation felt that training provided limited preparation for their deployment reporting that too little time was spent on dealing with people, crime prevention and working the beat (Fielding, 1988). A common perception, voiced by police officers engaged in police research, is that all recruits must pass through the 'academy' before the real learning begins; before they are introduced to the practical realities of police work. In short, classroom training is typically conceived as idealistic and impractical due to the "gap between the operational world and the classroom" (Bayley and Bittner, 1984; 35).

Policing is therefore deemed by officers as a 'craft' (Chatterton, 1995); a collection of personal skills and attributes that an individual gains through experience to help them become an effective police officer and not something that can be gained through formal education or training. Due to the unpredictable, diverse and complex realities and situations in which officers find themselves, policing cannot be reduced to principles or science. 'Learning the art of policing' (Chan et al, 2003) can only be learnt through experience in handling a multitude of unique situations over and over again, (Bayley and Bittner, 1984), often through a process trial and error. However, it would be political suicide for the police organisation to publicly acknowledge the unpredictability of police work or to admit that decisions and tactical choices are informed by such 'craft' knowledge since this would introduce doubt regarding their claims to professionalism and ability to exert control.

Whilst PCSOs do not receive anywhere near the level of classroom training prior to deployment as that received by police probationers, largely due to differing demands of respective roles, the training they do receive has potentially significant symbolic value. This short period of instruction is an important way for PCSO recruits to begin to learn how to conduct police work (Hopper, 1977), and represents the gateway through which they will become

socialised into the organisation, its traditions, the importance of discipline, and to those collective meanings that reside within the occupational culture. As noted by Fielding (1988; 1) “The culture of the police service is inculcated through the initial training process "the planned efforts of the organisation to transform recruits into novice members". The perception of the classroom as an arena for socialisation, rather than as a learning environment, does not negate the value of the formal training academy, but merely suggests that it is but one stage for recruits to pass through in learning what is expected of them by the organisation.

Organisational socialisation has been defined as

> “the process by which organisational members learn the required behaviours and supportive attitudes necessary to participate as a member of an organisation, (Van Maanen, 1975, 207, Van Maanen and Schein, 1979).

Within the police organisation, this equates to recruits learning to see the world as do their more experienced colleagues in order to maintain the traditions of police work (Manning, 1978). However, there are various stages of socialisation that a recruit must travel through to be sufficiently socialised. At the academy stage the socialisation of police recruits is deemed to be fixed, collective, and sequential, whereby the personal characteristics of the individual are stripped away in order to encourage conformity (Jones, 1986, in Chan, 2001). According to Van Maanen (1976) individuals prepare themselves for entering the police organisation by taking on values, attitudes and knowledge of the organisation which he defines as a period of anticipatory socialisation. Van Maanen (ibid), in his observational study of police recruits in the early 1970s, identified a high degree of anticipatory socialisation due to recruit aspirations being focused on ‘making a difference’ whereby recruits frequently experienced a reality shock following entry into the organisation. It is foreseeable that PCSOs may also have unrealistic expectations as a result of their common aspirations of becoming fully sworn police officers (Crawford et al, 2003, Cooper et al, 2006, Johnston, 2006, Paskall, 2007). Later studies such as Fielding (1988) and Chan et al (2003) also identify recruits as holding high levels of anticipatory socialisation due to

respect for the occupation and impressions of the varied and exciting nature of police work.

For Van Maanen (1973) the recruits' initiation into the organisation can be seen as occurring within four stages; choice, introduction, encounter and metamorphosis. The first stage, choice, relates to the individual's motivations for becoming a police officer, whilst the second stage, introduction, relates to their experiences within the police academy. During training, recruits learn an 'in-the-same-boat' collective consciousness and by being "exposed to a partial, organizational history which details certain personalities, past events, places and implied relationships that the recruit is expected eventually to learn", they learn that formal rules and regulations are applied inconsistently (Van Maanen, 1973; 415).

The third stage identified by Van Maanen (1973), encounter, refers to the immersion of the officer into police work through working closely with a field training officer to advise and prepare the recruit for applying those principles introduced to them during the second stage. It is here that the recruit is most susceptible to attitude change as they learn "how to walk, how to stand, and how to speak and how to think and what to say and see" (ibid; 413) by watching, listening and mimicking the more experienced officer. Fielding (1988) also identified that recruits were eager to learn of the 'war stories' during training only to become frustrated and disenchanted upon learning the routinized and mundane reality of police work once they started working in the field. However, Chan (2001) suggests that field training experience was not homogenous. Recruits engaged in the study reported experiencing good and bad models of police work depending upon area of deployment, shift supervision and working styles of the local area.

The final stage identified by Van Maanen (ibid), metamorphosis, is concerned with the individual acceptance and adjustments made by officers in managing their expectations of police work. Schein (1985) argues that coping with the emotional reality of the job is the most difficult problem for newcomers to an occupation to resolve. This adaptation, for Van Maanen

(1973, 1976) is about becoming complacent and adopting the group norm of staying out of trouble until the reward of 'real' police work, i.e. crime fighting, arises whereupon they might glean stimulation and their desired occupational identity. It is possible that those PCSOs who hold high expectations and desires to become involved in 'real' police work will become disillusioned due to emphasis upon order maintenance and service aspects of the police role.

Whilst such findings infer that the police culture exerts a powerful influence upon officer socialisation, it is also important to appreciate that the socialisation process is not uniform and extends beyond the 'breaking in process' of the police training academy (Van Maanen, 1973, 1976, Fielding, 1988 and Chan et al, 2003). Drawing attention to variations within socialisation in terms of the nature of police assignments, location, supervision and colleagues, Van Maanen and Manning (1978) depict the socialisation process as a continual process. Mirroring their rejection of an all encompassing police culture, both Fielding (1988) following his five year study of police recruits in Derbyshire, and Chan et al (2003) building upon research within the New South Wales police in Australia, provide support for this assertion. For Fielding (1988; 54) the cultural lessons introduced via the academy did not automatically translate into practice, recruits do not "pass through training like automatons but reflect on their experience and evaluate the programme according to their practical use on the street", thereby adopting a proactive role in the socialisation process. Decisions made on the street are an expression of the individual's perspective as they negotiate their self-identity, reflect upon cultural knowledge and make sense of all influences upon a desired course of action (ibid). It would therefore appear fair to assume that the values and experiences a person brings with them might continue to exert an influence upon decision making rather than being overhauled by the culture, but will continue to have meaning in the decisions they make. The community oriented nature of the PCSO role can attract individuals with considerable work and life experience (Cooper et al, 2006). Such individuals may also hold transferable skills and specific knowledge

and experience of working with the public and providing customer service, which will influence their decision making as a PCSO.

Chan (2001) goes further and relates theories of socialisation with police reform and the socio-political conditions of policing and cultural change. Eager to assert the variation within culture within the police occupation and the instability of the police organisational environment in light of changes in police rhetoric, management and accountability, Chan argues;

> 'a useful theory of police socialisation should be able to account for variations in the processes and outcomes of socialisation, recognise the active part played by recruits; situate the socialisation process within the socio-political conditions of policing as well as reflect the impact of any cultural change" (Chan, 2001; 118).

Drawing upon organisational theory and Bourdieu's concepts of 'field' – the structural conditions of police work policing arena and the varying levels of influence held by police within it - and 'habitus' – used to refer to the individual or shared dispositions of officers shaped by cultural knowledge – Chan (ibid) presents a persuasive framework for understanding the complexity of the socialisation process within the police occupation. The relationship between cultural knowledge (the habitus) and practice cannot however be assumed, since changes in structural conditions (the field) do not dictate practice. Chan (1997; 74) explains that whether structural changes influence change in cultural knowledge or practice depends on the nature of the change and the capacity of officers to adapt to that change.

A stable organisational culture and a passive role played by newcomers in the socialisation process cannot be assumed when structural conditions change and cultural knowledge diversifies. In the example of New South Wales, efforts to reform the organisation following reports of corruption and misconduct significantly altered the 'field' or nature of policing. As recruits gained experience in the reconstituted field, they learnt that certain strategies worked whilst others didn't, in short, the habitus was also forced to change, causing unsettlement amongst officers and leading them to rely further on the social capital of camaraderie. As asserted by Chan (2001; 130-

131) “it was through the interaction between the field and the habitus that practice was produced....These changing conditions made the socialisation process more diverse and contingent”. Since PCSOs are part of an altered ‘field’ of policing involving the civilianisation of the patrol function and provide operational support to police officers, it is feasible that they might alter the ‘habitus’ of neighbourhood policing and the cultural characteristics in which it is governed.

The Relationship between Rules and Action

Once in the field individuals begin to develop knowledge and learn accepted ways of working to enable them to operate as police officers. Police officers, as protectors of the state and officers of the law, are required to maintain order in line with the rule of law and principles of legality; that is, to apply the notion of minimal force when legality has been breached in a way that is fair, even handed and proportionate (Skolnick, 1966, Ericson, 1982, 2007). This implies that in order to do so, officers must adhere to formal rules of behaviour designed to regulate conduct. As recognised by Shearing and Ericson (1991; 481) the conception of “rules as instructions for action...provides an analytically elegant solution to the problem of social order”. Further support is provided by Skolnick (1966) who presents the law as offering a legal framework from which officers are obliged to draw authority, constraint and guidance. True enough, officers do need to draw upon legal rules in providing justifications for specific actions and use legislation as resources to achieve outcomes consistent with their notions of fairness and justice (Chatterton, 1979). However, what is equally implicit in the perception that rules generate action is that police simply follow rules in making decisions in maintaining order; a prospect that is fundamentally opposed to the inevitable use of discretion within police work.

Research emphasising the role of the police officer as ‘peacekeeper’ (Bittner, 1967, Chatterton, 1995) demonstrates that many encounters in which police become involved do not have legal significance or require enforcement and therefore cannot follow a formal prescribed course of

action. In many respects, Bittner's 'peacekeeper', with its emphasis upon the use of informal skills and techniques to maintain social control, can be seen as closely aligned the role and remit of PCSOs. Bittner (1967) explains that in order to adapt to the demands of the situation, officers are required to informally manage the demands of their role without recourse to the law in order to be more productive. Whilst peacekeeping can be conceived as all occupational routines that do not directly lead to arrest there is a lack of clarity with regards to what it means to do a good job of keeping the peace (Bittner, 1967). Officers tend to refer to the use of common sense, experience and practice as the makings of a good police officer. However, in seeking to maintain order, officers are more concerned with tackling a collective amount of problems rather than individual cases; "the basic routine of keeping the peace on skid row involves a process of matching the resources of control with situational exigencies" (Bittner, 1967; 713), whereby practicality is given primacy over legal or organisational norms. Furthermore, full enforcement of the law is not only impractical in relation to capabilities of the police organisation and justice system, but can have a damaging impact on police-public relations. Formal and legal rules may be too severe to apply to particular situations, can be ambiguous to democratically apply, and enforcement can have a counterproductive effect upon order and police legitimacy (Bowling and Foster, 2002). Therefore, even if the specifications of the law are present, officers rarely invoke the law and the use of discretion inevitably remains a definitive feature of uniformed patrol work.

Efforts to control unwanted discretion through administrative rules have however proven ineffective. Ericson (2007; 371) reports how administrative control has tended to remain a "self-referential exercise in the management culture of police organisations" whereby "most rules 'died' as the ink dried on the paper in which they were printed". He thus draws attention to the fact that some police organisations have scrapped their operations manuals due to the impracticality of administrative guidelines to the demands and realities of police work. The incompatibility of formal rules to practice is pertinently expressed by a Canadian officer cited by Ericson and Haggerty (1997; 347);

> “the manual, each person, each member does not have a manual....I guess the party line would be that’s a handbook...it’s to guide you and provide direction on policies and procedures. But I was a police officer for seven years before I saw it....what I learned was wrong. It was just the opposite of what the manual was prescribing...I never had the opportunity nor the need to go look something up. And I wouldn’t have known even where to look”.

The utility of formal rules to guide officers can therefore be questioned due to the lack of importance attached by police officers. As identified by Bittner, (1970; 4 in Manning, 1997; 146),

> “no measure of effort will ever succeed in eliminating or even meaningfully curtailing the area of discretionary freedom of the agent whose duty is to fit rules to cases”.

Similar incompatibilities may also be expected in relation to PCSO practice due to their discretionary freedom on the street.

As a result, many police researchers, particularly those undertaking observational studies of police culture, have questioned the applicability of formal rules to action (Cain, 1973, Holdaway, 1979, Chatterton, 1979, Punch, 1979, Reiner, 1978, 1992). Shearing and Ericson (1991) suggest it is doubtful that police officers walk around with rules in their heads that they apply to situations in the midst of action, concluding, with support from Wittgenstein (1992), that rules do not predict action. Indeed, as argued by Chatterton (1979) rules are rarely categorically imperative as they might have different meanings for members at different levels if the police organisation. In support, Bittner argues, rules ought to be grasped as “common sense constructs from the perspective of those who promulgate and live with them”, (Bittner, 1965; 251). In fact, rule-violation within specific contexts may be condoned providing this has not prevented their participation in a crime relevant incident or has led to complaints by the public (Manning 1977, 1979). It is important to recognise the need for the interpretive application of rules since, as asserted by Manning (1997; 147)

“rules provide clarity in relation to particular procedures...each time a rule is applied it has a contextual quality”.

Experiential Learning and the ‘Craft’ of Policing

In the absence of formal rules and procedures, officers utilise accumulated experience as a guide for action and as a means of learning acceptable practices within the organisation. Importantly what not to do is often as important as learning the ‘doing’ of policing’ if they are avoid discipline, (Manning, 1977, Holdaway, 1979, Bayley and Bittner 1984). Implicated within this is the idea that there are certain ‘rules of thumb’ that offers should adhere to in executing their duties. Such rules of thumb are facilitated through the police culture in response to situational demands (McBarnett, 1979). As identified by Norris (1989; 91);

> “The principal concern of the officer is the avoidance of negative sanctions wither from the organisation in the form of disciplinary proceedings or the loss of perks; or from the public, in terms of challenges to authority which entail physical or psychological harm”.

Chatterton’s study of two police subdivisions in a northern English force (1979) sought to understand the frames of reference and the ‘taken for granted facts of police life’ used by officers in implementing unit beat policing. The study involved 12 months of observation supplemented by additional visits to the station during weekends and holiday periods for another two years. Officer accounts of decision making and action were portrayed as both reasonable and credible irrespective of whether they contravened formal rules since they were appropriate to the circumstances of the situation in which officers were placed. In seeking to give meaning and legitimacy to their work, officers presented a bank of knowledge built on cumulative experience that they were expected to share with others. Holdaway (1989) in interpreting Chatterton’s findings, suggests policing is presented as a situationally specific activity whereby rules are worked then re-worked to meet the needs of the unfolding meaning of a situation. Officers

therefore develop working rules and shared understanding of practice through shared experiences and interaction. As such, the police officer may be perceived as a “nonmechanical official” (Skolnick, 1966; 237), whereby,

> “the degree of enforcement and the method of application will vary with each neighbourhood and community. There are no set rules, nor even general principles to be applied. Each policeman must, in a sense, determine the standard to be set in the area for which he is responsible”, (Smith, 1960, 19 in Skolnick, 1966; 237).

Shearing and Ericson (1991) propose that implicit rules derived from experience and analogous reasoning and transmitted from officer to officer, are used to give guidance for practical action by enabling the transferral of knowledge from one situation to another. Such stories can be told in various ways, they can be informative or representative highlighting the significance of events and experiences, or cautionary to present general conceptions of individuals with whom they come into contact. Ultimately, police use stories as a ‘practical toolkit of cultural resources’, to represent to each other the way things are and how the job ought to be done so that recruits can learn ‘the intuitive wisdom that is the basis of their craft’ (ibid, 1991, 324). Wood (2004) however questions the strength of such stories in justifying deviant action and providing barriers to cultural reform. Similarly, Chan (1996, 1997) whilst offering support for Shearing and Ericson (1991), argues that their analysis provides officers with a means of limiting their search for information, categorising information in different situations and enabling a number of accounts through which they can legitimate their actions.. Indeed, whilst officers everyday practice may be influenced by meanings created by their colleagues, they are not pre-determined by them, failing to account for the changing social and political context of police work. As argued by Fleming, Marks and Wood (2006; 4),

> “whilst individuals do not exist outside of a particular social context(s), they are conscious thinking subjects, and as such are situated rather than fully autonomous agents (Bevir and Rhodes, 2006, 4 in Fleming, Marks and Wood 2006; 4).

Chan's (1997) exploration of the four dimensions of cultural knowledge as operating within the habitus of policing is relevant here since it explores a catalogue of resources utilised by officers in determining action. The first dimension, 'axiomatic knowledge', refers to 'why things are done the way they are' in organisations. For police officers, the focus is upon defining themselves as the 'thin blue line' in safeguarding social order. As exemplified by Ericson (1982) police authority must be protected as an utmost priority in order to maintain this status. The second dimension, 'dictionary knowledge' is used to refer to the categorisation of individuals whom the police have contact (Cain, 1973 and Van Maanen, 1973). In developing dictionary knowledge, officers develop routine ways of categorising their environment and those within it that they become finely attuned to what is 'normal' and what is 'abnormal' depending upon the context of situations in which they are placed (Bittner, 1967, Ericson, 1982). The third dimension, 'directory knowledge' is used by police in determining how operational work is routinely conducted. Once indicators of 'abnormality' have been discerned these become routine practice and Chan (1997) notes the disproportionate effect this can have on specific societal groups such as minorities (Bayley and Mendolsohn, 1969). The fourth dimension, 'recipe knowledge' prescribes the menu of acceptable and unacceptable practices to be used in specific situations including strategies for coping with the uncertainties of police work. Chan (ibid) draws upon cultural studies offered by Van Maanen (1973) and Westley (1970) to illustrate that officers utilise tactics to avoid disciplinary actions, learn to stay out of trouble, and to protect colleagues to the extent of masking lying and misconduct (Skolnick and Fyfe 1994).

Chan's four dimensions of cultural knowledge are embedded within police cultural research but they also have relevance for the development of PCSO decision making and the development of a PCSO 'craft'. The image of PCSOs as 'crime fighters' embedded in Chan's 'axiomatic knowledge' is less likely to be as pronounced as amongst police officers, since they do not have the same pressure to fulfil the 'impossible mandate' (Manning 1978). However, their membership within the organisation and common aspirations to become fully sworn officers (Johnston, 2006, Cooper et al, 2006) may lead

PCSOs to pursue greater involvement in crime fighting over reassurance and peace-keeping.

Without the capacity to use force, PCSOs need to develop their own 'dictionary knowledge' to guide them in carrying out operational work. Whilst force can be used as a legitimate way of taking charge of situations, PCSOs have to seek alternative means of doing so based on the situational exigencies faced and accumulated experience of what works in what circumstances and with whom. Potential methods might include placating and persuading individuals to comply with their wishes and utilising a high level of discretion when dealing with behaviour on the fringes of illegality in order to develop relations with anti-social sections of the community (Bittner, 1967). PCSOs will still be faced with demands of 'getting the day's work done' (Chan, 1997, 79). PCSOs spend a much higher proportion of their time within local communities gathering local knowledge about individuals and their behaviour. It is therefore highly probable that PCSOs will construct categories of individuals similar to those by fully sworn officers due to their shared goals of tackling criminal activity and disorder, and might, like police officers apply such categories discriminatorily.

PCSO situated recipe knowledge may reflect that presented by Chan (ibid) as they will be exposed to dominant values and established methods of coping with the demands of police work within the organisation. However, there are a number of conditional influences upon inculcation of 'recipe knowledge'. Firstly, the adoption of officer recipe knowledge of values is dependent on the existence of dominant values within the organisation and amongst neighbourhood police officers with whom PCSOs work. Secondly, PCSOs will only adopt similar understandings and a sense of solidarity if integrated and exposed to the same cultural knowledge, or where there is lack of integration, PCSOs endorse such values to facilitate it. Thirdly, whilst there may be aspects of shared experience, differential roles, capabilities and experience of policing is unlikely to lead to PCSOs adopting the same acceptable and unacceptable standards of behaviour as those of police officers. Whilst they may observe and draw upon these standards, it is more

likely that PCSOs will develop their own shared values of acceptable ways of working based on their unique role.

What emerges from previous police research, as seen in the work of Chatterton (1979), Manning (1995) and Chan, (1996, 1997), is the development of various forms of cultural knowledge by officers through observing, interacting and performing with other officers. This cumulative experience produces a collection of informal methods, tactics and skills to be used in decision making on the street. This has been characterised in the literature as the police craft, (Wilson, 1968, Chatterton, 1979, 1995, Bayley and Bittner, 1984). Wilson (1968) describes craftsmanship as a unifying set of beliefs consistent with a work style that is craftlike. Crank (1990; 335) illustrates how the commitment to craftsmanship is expressed by individual police officers,

> "Craftsmanship stresses apprenticeship, a generalist approach to policing, a lack of deference to authority, and oral tradition rather than written documentation".

According to Bayley and Bittner (1984) an officer must learn important lessons in order to master the 'craft' of policing. These relate to the identification of relevant and reasonable goals and tactics that enable them to achieve different goals in varying circumstances and ensure they adopt a presence in employing those tactics that, "pacifies, placates and mollifies" (ibid, 50). However, organisational goals are not always made clear due to the wide remit of police work and instruction by senior officers may conflict with preferred ways of working and individual styles of policing. As identified by Bayley and Bittner (1984; 43) "experience has a great deal to teach police about goals. Essentially it teaches an instinct for priorities".

One of the major goals for patrol officers is the need to reproduce order (Ericson, 1982); that is, taking charge of communities by doing whatever is necessary to restore order. In the case of police officers, this might involve separating parties involved, and if that proves ineffective, applying force and even arrest. The process of restoring order could

potentially be particularly challenging for PCSOs since they do not possess the same level of 'battery charges' (Punch, 1979b) or options for action as held by police officers and supervision. Avenues for action can only involve separating parties and using their communication skills to dispel disorder and encourage compliance. If these more subtle methods prove ineffective, PCSOs must withdraw from the situation and defer decision making for action to one of their sworn officer colleagues, thus losing legitimacy and authority from those they are seeking to control. Furthermore, withdrawal may not be a viable option when faced with the immediacy of a situation, leading to PCSOs placing themselves at risk due to the lack of training and protective equipment with which to defend themselves. As identified by Punch, (1979b, 116), "a benign bobby...still brings to the situation a uniform, a truncheon, and a battery of resource charges...which can be employed when appeasement fails and fists start flying".

Police officers have a wide range of tactical options to draw upon in maintaining order and execute discretion in a way that best satisfies organisational goals and the exigencies of a given situation (Manning, 1978). Bayley and Bittner (1984) explain that police officers have a wide range of choices for action during interactions with the public. Whilst PCSOs are unable to arrest or physically restrain individuals, they will be able to draw upon similar tactics utilised by police officers to restore order, including mediation between involved parties, listening and providing empathy, issuing friendly advice and warnings. The capacity of PCSOs to execute such tactics is likely to be dependent upon the communication skills of the individual PCSO and his or her knowledge of what tactics work with whom and in what circumstances that can only be gained through experience. In responding to the demands of their occupational environment, PCSOs will develop their own 'craft-knowledge' and tactics based on their role and capabilities that they may draw upon to exert control and dissolve conflict.

An additional relevant tactic utilised by officers is presence (Bayley and Bittner, 1984). Referring to more than action, presence involves 'being something' in order to secure goals whilst managing tension, for example,

officers need to be approachable and fair whilst simultaneously being attuned to possible signs of danger. Similar tensions are also identified by Brown (2000) in discussing the prevalence of stress within police occupations, arguing that police need to manage the tension between the need to be perceived as sympathetic and the need to exert physical force. The aspect of presence is likely to be an essential aspect of learning for PCSOs due to their increased accessibility and visibility. Again, developing presence is a skill that can only be developed through experience,

> "the inward equanimity that leads to outward poise is not something people are born with, nor can it be taught. As in sports, it is learned through practice", (Bayley and Bittner, 1984; 51).

In the same way that police officers might adopt presentational rules to justify their decision making to superiors (Smith and Gray, 1985), officers utilise presentational strategies in their dealings with the public in order to maintain public legitimacy (Manning, 1997). Manning poses that in order to justify decisions and actions, officers defend the notion of the police as a 'professional service' in order to protect their mandate and to enable greater occupational solidarity and officer autonomy. Externally, officers need to present a united front supporting the decisions and actions of others and the policies and processes under which they operate. Internally, officer actions are rarely questioned due to the situational context in which decisions occur providing there is no threat to the reputation of the service via public complaint or implications for performance (Chatterton, 1979).

As representatives of the organisation and their increased accessibility, PCSOs must also adhere to presentational strategies. An important aspect of the PCSO role is to improve public confidence in the police. In situations where citizens express apathy in the abilities of police to tackle local crime and disorder issues, or where citizens have experienced a less than satisfactory service from the police, it is important for PCSOs to try to respond and fulfil somewhat of an ambassadorial role. However, the capacity for PCSOs to build confidence and trust and subsequent public legitimacy is likely to be dependent upon the strength of their communication

and interpersonal skills, public perceptions of the degree of integration within the police service and the extent to which the public perceive PCSOs as legitimate and authoritative representatives of the police organisation. Their professional mandate is likely to be jeopardised by their limited claims to authority. As identified by Manning (1997; 198), “Deference....is based on hierarchy and making visible of status arrangements...Establishing authority is the officer’s principal concern...without which further controlled interactional exchange is not possible”. Whilst PCSOs are able to build situated knowledge due to their sustained presence within an area, the degree of respect provided by citizens may be mitigated by their limited powers of enforcement potentially affording them lower ‘professional’ status and autonomy in the eyes of the public.

Competence and the Making of a ‘Good Officer’

The previous section has explored the lack of transference between formal rules and procedures to police action. Police decision making is notoriously unpredictable and determined by situational context. In considering appropriate action, officers need to consider shared assumptions, working rules and boundaries within cultural knowledge and supervisory expectations and to learn the ways in which decisions may be rationalised if they are to operate without public complaint and internal discipline and to avoid loss of legitimacy (Manning, 1997). Police research has portrayed police officers in their dealings with the public as ‘competent social actors’ (Bittner, 1967) and ‘street corner politicians’ (Muir, 1977), exemplifying the need to operate flexibly, carefully and sensitively during interaction(s) with the public. Research however suggests there is no blanket standard for assessing the competence of a police officer due to the wide range of duties and situations in which officers can be expected to engage, (Van Maanen, 1973, 1974, Fielding, 1984, Chan, 1996). Whilst emphasis within training and occupational learning might emphasise the use of commonsense it is insufficient in determining action and decision making.

In making sense of the ways in which competence is ascribed in the police organisation, Fielding (1994) suggests that competence may be delineated into three essential components; observation, power and negotiation. Firstly, officers must possess the observational sensitivity to their beat to gain local knowledge. The ability to communicate with the public and each other and apply the law to each practical situation comes with experience and judgement. According to Bittner (1967), once assigned, officers seek to acquire a rich body of local knowledge of persons and activities by cultivating personal acquaintances with as many people as possible by 'doing the rounds' within the area. Secondly, the use of power is paramount. The power of the officer, symbolised by the uniform itself, is implicit whereby the use of physical force in police interventions is rare. However, the potential use of force is according to Fielding (1994; 577), "a crucial element in assessments by the police of competent 'bobbying'". Officers need to learn to use coercion in an understated and interactionally finely-attuned way whereby the uniform itself can resolve conflict and the use of force becomes a last resort. In the absence of the symbolic authority of the uniform and the threat of coercion, learning craft skills of negotiation and mediation are likely to be ever more pronounced for PCSOs. The third aspect of competence, negotiation, refers to the careful management of contacts with the public, even if that leads to deception. Fielding demonstrates how officers not only make claims to greater experience in order to maintain public confidence and authority but will develop through experience ways of assessing whether to intervene in situations of conflict and the best ways of doing so.

Drawing upon research within the Metropolitan Police, Manning (1997) identifies widespread agreement across all levels within the police hierarchy of what constitutes 'good police work'. Officers felt that in order to manage incidents with minimal dissent, manage agreement between parties and maintain control over the direction of their action, competent police officers were able to adopt a cool, unemotional tone, demonstrate properly executed tactics and properly applied skills, and adopt an open minded view of encounters with the public. Indeed, ensuring emotional control is not only

deemed to be an important component of police work but has implications for acceptance into the informal culture. As identified by Brown (2000; 252) in exploring ways of dealing with the demands police work, “Emotional control is an important part of the officer’s occupational identity, both in terms of the public’s expectation and demands of the informal culture”. However, as shown by Fitzgerald (1999) and Quinton et al (2000) in relation to police stops with young people, officers don’t always respond in a fair and emotionally controlled way in their dealings with young people often leading to escalation of problems and challenges to authority.

In dealing with the vast array of circumstances and situations involved in police work, officers need to be able to skilfully manage their interactions with the public not only to achieve desired results but to encourage public consent and avoid the escalation of conflict. Since officer experience is dependent upon the situated context of police action, what is considered ‘competence’ tends to depend upon the perspective of the audience observing police decisions and behaviour (Fielding, 1984, 1989). In the case of patrol officers and PCSOs working within communities and with limited oversight by more senior officers, the audience tends to be citizens and other colleagues. Therefore, according to Fielding (1988), the formation of competent practice for police officers requires the socialisation of formal rules, situated knowledge and language to facilitate interaction with the public,

> “the ability to orient one’s own performance to what are perceived as the dictates of the situation is the initial step in appreciating the influence of how one proceeds on the outcomes of encounters with citizens”, (Fielding, 1988; 84).

Once officers get to grips with the demands of the situation faced, they learn to code public expectations based upon moral judgement and consider the priorities of the organisation and the capacity of police resources to meet those goals, (Punch, 1979b).

Fielding’s (1994) component of observation is not only significant in terms of obtaining local knowledge but is inextricably linked to exerting control. Patrol

officers and their performance are inextricably linked to the sector in which they work requiring a close working knowledge of the geographical ecology of their beat and those within it becomes essential. As explained by Van Maanen, (1973; 56) in reflecting upon advice provided by field training officers to recruits and linked to Chan's 'dictionary knowledge' (Chan, 1997) personal knowledge of the physical area in which they police is indispensable in negotiating control and becoming a 'good cop',

> "It doesn't matter whether or not you've lived here since year one, you don't know the city until you become a cop. Particularly you're gonna have to learn your sector inside and out. You gotta know every street and alley, every building and vacant lot...You learn not to take chances in this job and you'll start by memorising every fucking driveway in this sector 'cause if you don't know where you are all the time, you're a lousy cop".

Knowledge of place and prescriptions of behaviour therein provide officers with claims to territory and autonomy over the area they police and present an impression of being 'on top of an area' (Chatterton, 1979); essential aspects in communicating a sense of control and authority to the public.

Building upon the work of Fielding (1994), Chan et al (2003) reflecting upon their research with recruits within the New South Wales police in Australia asserts that recruits identified that exposure to both positive and negative role models during field training had impacted upon their perceptions of what they considered key characteristics of 'good police work'. The research, using a longitudinal approach to track the socialisation of officers into the force over a two year period, involved triangulation of methods. Consisting of a four-stage survey, which attracted a response rate of between 99 and 96 per cent for the first three stages and a lower 60% for the final questionnaire, three-staged individual interviews of a random sample of seventy-five recruits, and over 900 hours of observation across 115 shifts, the project clearly offers a systematic analysis of recruit's experiences.

The research highlighted three features of 'good' police work relating to the avoidance of conflict and potential violence. The first feature was the ability to handle difficult situations effectively through clear communication, remaining calm and confident, and possessing the right 'people' skills to alleviate tension. Respondents highlighted examples whereby officers showed patience in engagement with the public, showed interest in the predicament in which individuals were involved and offered advice and reassurance. A second identified feature of good police work was the ability to listen, act sensitively and respectfully to avoid the escalation of a situation. A twenty year-old male officer explained, "using your mouth and just taking time to think about what you're saying in a situation, it can resolve so much" (Chan et al, 2003, 176). The third mark of good police work was showing good judgement and tactical skills to offer restraint. Officers emphasised the importance of adopting a relaxed, unemotional approach from the outset when dealing with the public in order to encourage compliance, and only resorting to force as a last resort to restore control. Conversely, signs of 'bad' police work included avoidance of work, cutting corners due to apathy, poor communication skills, being overly aggressive and argumentative, and a failure to listen and project a caring attitude.

Chan et al's (2003) research is relevant to the competence of PCSOs for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is likely that these three features will be pertinent to PCSO experiences of maintaining order since they do not have the same coercive abilities, training or personal protective equipment enjoyed by police officers. Secondly, a crucial aspect of their remit is to build community relations and to reassure the public; objectives that can only be secured through sensitive policing and consent. Failure to communicate effectively and show concerted efforts to engage will serve to alienate the PCSOs from the public and further exacerbate negative assessments of police. Research on public confidence in encounters with police demonstrates the correlation between officer demeanour, such as providing fair and courteous treatment, being polite and respectful, and public satisfaction (Skogan 2006, Reisig and Chandek, 2001, Quinton et al 2000). Furthermore, as noted by Chan et al (2003) insensitive or disrespectful

policing could undo good relations built by community policing therefore having a counterproductive impact on the ability of PCSOs to reassure and build community confidence and co-operation. Thirdly, due to their limited coercive abilities PCSOs will be most effective, as Bittner (1967) suggests if they are able to judge when situations require the action of officers and where enforcement might be avoided by the use of less formal measures.

Legitimacy and Procedural Justice

As civilian officers with limited authority and a limited capacity to use coercive force, PCSOs must establish and refine their crafts skills of negotiation, communication and conflict management (Fielding, 1994, Chan et al, 2003) if they are to acquire legitimacy, secure compliance and maintain control within target communities. Falling levels of public satisfaction with policing (Roberts and Hough, 2003) have the potential of leading to reduced levels of police legitimacy and the potential withdrawal of public co-operation and support (Tyler and Huo, 2002). Crawford (2008) notes that police rely on citizen's co-operation (or consensual deference) for the majority of the time, only reverting to coercive legal powers when compliance breaks down or when legitimacy has been denied. To maintain social order, police need to be widely obeyed by the public. Obedience to the law and therefore to police as upholders of the law is needed both during police encounters and beyond direct contact since finite resources limit the police's ability to be everywhere at once. The police therefore require widespread, voluntary law-abiding behaviour driven by respect for the law and for the police themselves to enable them to focus on those who are less likely to comply with their demands and more likely to question their legitimacy (Tyler, 2004) It is therefore relevant for the purposes of understanding how PCSOs might deliver reassurance and achieve community co-operation to consider the wider concept of legitimacy and the potential of procedural justice to enhance police legitimacy.

Legitimacy, according to Crawford (2008), is an essential part of criminal justice and policing. Beetham (1991; 20) argues that legitimacy is

multi-dimensional, operating at various distinct levels “each of which provides moral grounds for compliance or co-operation on the part of those subordinate to a given power relations”. For power to be fully legitimate, three conditions are required; its conformity to established rules, justification of these rules through shared beliefs, and the consent of the subordinate to relations of power (Beetham, ibid). Within established systems of power and authority, legitimacy operates at two different levels; firstly, at the level of the institution through the broad justifying principles that inform how power is exercised by that institution, and secondly, at an individual level, through the consent of those individuals subject to systems of power. Beetham (ibid) identifies that ‘legitimacy deficits’ arise when consent is denied or withdrawn due to ‘an absence of shared beliefs’ or where there is ‘a lack of agreement between rules and supporting beliefs’. For Beetham (ibid) therefore, people view social institutions as legitimate when they perceive these institutions as representative of particular normative and ethical frameworks. Maintaining such frameworks is essential for the police as agents of social control and therefore regulators of social conduct. According to Hough et al (2010; 205)

> “if the police abuse their powers and wield their authority in unfair ways, this cannot only damage people’s sense of obligation to obey their directives...it can also damage public perceptions of their moral authority, and therefore the moral right to dictate appropriate behaviour”.

In the context of policing and understanding why people obey the law, Tyler (2006) identifies two forms of legitimacy; institutional and personal. Institutional legitimacy is determined by the particular remit of legal authorities and the extent to which this enables them to make decisions which ought to be deferred to, complied with and obeyed. Personal legitimacy is secured when legal authorities are perceived as competent and honest. Achieving personal legitimacy is dependent upon the ability of individual officers to demonstrate competence, follow procedures, take a measured approach to discretion and make decisions fairly and justly (Tyler, 2004). Tyler (2004), supported by Hough et al (2010), further argues that police effectiveness in fighting crime does not determine public perceptions

or legitimacy of the police. In order to achieve co-operation, police officers must find additional reasons for co-operation of the public beyond performance. According to Tyler (ibid; 86) the police therefore try to "tap into internalised values to secure compliance and gain co-operation". A key value held by the public is the legitimacy of the police in upholding the law and the belief that people, as part of their membership within a community, have an obligation both to each other and to follow the orders of legitimate authorities, such the police. Taking a Durkheimian approach to analysing public confidence, Jackson and Sunshine (2007; 214) argue that since,

> "Crime and disorder challenge the moral structure of society...people look to agents of social control to challenge group outrage, defend group values and re-establish moral norms".

The police organisation must therefore embody these dominant values within the goals and values of the organisation and communicate this commitment through their officers to bolster legitimacy. Tyler (2004, 2006) and Jackson and Sunshine (2007) suggest that procedural justice is both a means by which citizens can identify with the police, and a mechanism to be used by the police to demonstrate their commitment to the justifying goals and values of the organisation through fair, dignified and professional policing.

Non-compliance is an inevitable part of the occupational environment of policing. Policing is necessarily a coercive activity involving the control of individual behaviours and freedoms. A study by Mastrofski, Snipes and Supina (1996) suggests that 22% of police encounters are shaped by non-compliance. Disobedience or limited legitimacy is therefore sufficient enough to be a very real challenge for police officers, and an even greater challenge for PCSOs who, without full powers of enforcement and the physical symbols of authority (such as handcuffs or batons), must develop alternative means to encourage compliance with their requests. During police encounters power resides with the police officer both in terms of decision making and determining outcomes. The way in which police utilise that power ultimately shapes their perceived legitimacy for those from whom they seek compliance. Individuals stopped by the police have to accept decisions and

outcomes that are unfavourable, even unfair. Empirical examinations of the relationship between legitimacy and compliance are however relatively weak largely due to being based on surveys conducted with those from whom police seek compliance (Mastrofski, Snipes and Supina, 1996). However, Tyler (2006) asserts that legitimacy is a powerful element in securing compliance whereby the way in which demands are made rather than the actual demand itself becomes more important. Indeed, there is a growing body of evidence – largely from the United States - that people are more willing to accept police decisions that are perceived unfavourable and more likely to perceive legal authorities as legitimate if they have been treated with respect and in a procedurally just manner (Tyler and Huo, 2002, Tyler, 2006, Crawford, 2008, Hough et al, 2010). Emerging findings from a study by the National Police Improvement Agency (NPIA) in England and Wales provides additional support for the legitimising value of procedural justice and the positive impact of legitimacy upon compliance. Hough et al (2010) report a direct positive relationship between trust and perceived legitimacy in the police. They argue;

> "the experience of procedural fairness fosters in people feelings of motive-based trust in (and shared group membership with) the authority concerned...the manner in which people...are treated by those in authority communicates information to them about their status within those groups. When police provide individuals with appropriate status information (through fair procedures), they are more likely to feel a sense of obligation to the police and more likely to feel aligned with the ethical and moral framework they believe the police to embody...they are more likely to perceive the police as legitimate" (ibid, 206).

Being treated according to principles of fairness and respect serves to support mutual obligation to the police, the law and justice and are more likely to comply with demands made upon them.

In order to encourage compliance, maintain consent and public co-operation in reporting of crime therefore, it is therefore imperative that the

police, and therefore PCSOs, act in a way that encourages legitimacy (Tyler, 2006). Whilst PCSOs are afforded the legitimate authority of the police organisation they cannot deploy power to the same degree as police officers. However, their limited powers and authority does not necessarily prohibit them from securing legitimacy and achieving compliance. As argued by Weber (1968), the ability to issue commands and achieve compliance does not rest on the possession or ability to use power but upon whether the individual concerned is able to secure respect or legitimacy from those whom they are seeking compliance and so encourage obedience to such commands. Further, there is evidence to suggest that the more authoritative an intervention, the greater the threat to the identity of the would-be offender and the greater the likelihood that it will provoke resistance and/or retaliation (Tedeshi and Felson, 1994). As the interface between the police organisation and the public due to their increased accessibility, PCSOs have the potential through procedural based policing to augment the legitimacy of the police. However, possessing knowledge as to how best to engage with both law abiding and non law abiding members of the public to respectively encourage co-operation and compliance cannot be taken for granted.

The ability (and willingness) of individual PCSOs to engage with citizens according to procedural justice principles and achieve legitimacy is significantly shaped by three factors. Firstly, the individual PCSO's command of craft skills of negotiation, persuasion and communication. Secondly, the PCSO who has cumulative experience of dealing with a variation of problems and/or tasks are more likely to possess the necessary cultural and procedural knowledge to demonstrate their competence and professionalism in executing their demands and securing the desired outcome. Thirdly, the enthusiasm and willingness to adhere to procedural justice will depend upon the role orientations held by the individual PCSO. It may be the case that those who have stronger orientations to community policing, are committed to community engagement and so have developed in-depth local knowledge of individuals have a stronger propensity to determine what action and what approach is more likely to induce compliance and therefore to reinforce their legitimacy.

However, there are potential limitations to securing legitimacy for PCSOs. Rather than promoting compliance, familiarity between an individual PCSO and individual citizens, supported by the deployment of PCSOs within discrete geographical areas, might have a detrimental impact upon compliance. According to Mastrofski, Snipes and Supina (1996; 296) argue that “familiarity appears to breed contempt...citizens familiar with officers tend to feel a certain licence not to comply with their requests”. Furthermore, as noted by Crawford (2008), despite the standardisation of PCSO powers, confusion amongst the public remains with regards to PCSO responsibilities, limitations to their role and competencies. This confusion could potentially lead to a loss of legitimacy when PCSOs are unable to act and when people’s expectations of PCSOs are disappointed.

Summary

This chapter has outlined the socialisation process through which police officers progress in becoming members of the organisation. In so doing, officers are required to internalise both the formal, administrative rules of the organisation secured through classroom training and the informal, working rules of policing that can only be secured through experience and working alongside other officers. It is only through knowledge of accepted working rules of behaviour and learning the craft skills of policing can officers become competent in dealing with the unpredictability and competing demands of police work and become effective members of the organisation. Research suggests that competence is dependent upon an officer’s ability to develop knowledge of their occupational environment and skilfully manage use of coercion in order to manage potential conflict, facilitate compliance and restore order (Fielding, 1994). Whilst many of the associated competencies of the police officer are relevant to PCSOs, they do not have the same level of ‘battery charges’ (Punch, 1983), training or symbolic authority enjoyed by police officers.

In order to compensate for their lack of police powers and symbolic authority, PCSOs will need to rely upon local knowledge, understanding of

police procedures and their command of craft skills, such as persuasion and communication, to demonstrate their competence and legitimacy to the public and manage conflict. Like police officers, PCSOs need to have 'bottle' (Norris, 1989) in order to "keep one's nerve in a situation which is potentially violent, and, with skilful use of talk and bluff, calm it down without recourse to force" (ibid, 99). The practical reality and effectiveness of less coercive strategies to resolve conflict is however a pertinent issue. Cooper (1997), drawing upon observations of police officers across four American states, identifies a range of alternative forms of conflict resolution to the use of force, such as mediation, negotiation and problem management that are consistent with the pragmatic realities of policing. The ability of PCSOs to use such techniques not only rests on securing these skills through training and experience, but the reality of policing inevitably invokes situations of conflict whereby involvement is inevitable and whereupon such alternative resolution processes are impractical. Management of conflict is particularly pronounced for PCSOs due to their involvement in tackling underage drinking and youth disorder away from the safe haven of the police car. Research does suggest that police officers typically respond leniently to alcohol possession of those under age and being intoxicated in public (Shafer, 2005), however should those intoxicated become violent or threatening, police officers, unlike PCSOs, are trained and equipped to respond to protect themselves and resolve conflict.

Chapter 3 The Police Occupational Culture

Introduction

Sociological studies of the police argue that police officers form specific cultural attitudes, values and beliefs due to their common experience of the strains and challenges associated with police work, (Skolnick, 1966, Van Maanen, 1974, Manning, 1989). Entering the police organisation with limited powers of enforcement and a remit for reassurance and 'softer' policing (Innes, 2004), PCSOs are unlikely to experience police work or contribute to the performance culture in the same way as fully sworn officers. Despite such role conflict, PCSOs must become integrated into the occupational and organisational culture in order to deliver. In order to support their integration and manage the demands of their work, PCSOs will either endorse the cultural beliefs, attitudes and values to which they are exposed, or construct cultural meanings that reflect their unique position and differential experience.

This chapter therefore explores current debate surrounding police culture and the contested notion of a universal police culture. In so doing, the chapter is structured into three sections. The first section explores the origins of sociological studies of the police officer, police behaviour and culture. The second section explores support for a monolithic police culture shared by all police officers paying attention to its defining characteristics, function and expression and to the associated implications for PCSO integration into the organisation. The third and final section examines evidence of variation within the police occupational culture. Preferring to use the term subculture rather than culture, those who reject notions of a universal culture within the police suggest cultural attitudes, values and beliefs held by police officers vary according to organisational and departmental style, the orientations to policing held by individual officers, officer rank and duty and area of deployment. In reaction to such variation, the section concludes by examining commentators on police culture who question the notion of police

culture before going on to explore the implications for the emergence of a PCSO occupational culture.

The Sociology of the Police Officer

It is well acknowledged within both historic (Skolnick, 1966, Bittner 1967, Cain, 1973, Holdaway, 1983), and contemporary studies of policing (Manning 1995, McLaughlin, 2007, Foster, 2003) that Michael Banton's pioneering study, 'The Policeman and the Community', was instrumental in paving the way for academic studies of policing and the police occupation. Reiner, (1992b, 439) identifies Banton's study as 'the clear and distinguished genesis' for British police research, remarking that before this time, knowledge of the British police had been provided by amateurs, as journalists or ex police officers, or by controlled government sponsored surveys intended to inform public inquiries. Banton's independent status as a social anthropologist enabled a sociological study *of* the police, as opposed to a sensationalist or sympathetic study *for* the police.
In so doing, the study laid some important foundations for sociological analyses of police culture. As identified by Mack (1964, 25);

> "it is the first systematic and scientific attempt to describe a sub-culture, that of the British police, which hitherto had remained sacred and incommunicado"

Writing at a time when the police enjoyed unprecedented high levels of public approval, Banton articulated his rationale for the study as a desire to learn about, 'the nature of the policeman's job and the pressures that bear upon him", (Banton, 1964, x). This broad aim was subsequently considered in relation to the tensions between law enforcement and peacekeeping within the police role and the relationship between the police and the public. With little research findings from which Banton could draw upon in his research, Banton looked to Westley's sociological study 'Violence and the Police' (1970), conducted in Illinois and Indiana in the 1940s due to his similar preoccupation with routine police work, role perceptions and the relationship

between the police and the public. Drawing upon participant observation and individual interviews with front line officers, Westley (1970) explains that officers held a suspicious view of the public as a consequence of only coming into contact with the non law-abiding public. Working within the oppositional roles of service and control, officers subsequently experience hostility from the communities in which they operate causing them to perceive the community as 'enemy', (ibid). The first sociologist to depict police officers as pragmatic and upholding a sense of mission in relation to their role, Westley observed the policeman's morality is "one of expediency, and his self-conception one of a martyr" (Westley, 1970, 97). Whilst providing insight into routine police work, Banton considered Westley's work as too extreme and pessimistic, presenting a corrupt policing environment that he felt was not inherent within Britain. Banton consequently adopted a more optimistic approach to his analysis of routine police work, that sought to explore what might be learnt from the organisation that was working well or what today may be referred to as good practice, (Reiner, 1992a).

Banton's study involved participant observation research of police constables working within the Lothian and Borders police force, Scotland, and officers working within three cities in the United States. Banton presents Britain as a homogeneous, integrated society with consistent values, resulting in a police mandate that is less concerned about crime and offenders, and more concerned about assisting citizens and victims in distress, (McLaughlin, 2007). This, according to Banton, provided a significant moral authority for the officer. The British constable is depicted "as the embodiment of impersonal rectitude, patrolling symbols of social authority, individual incarnations of the collective conscience", (Banton, 1964, 240), holding a symbolic public status and demanding respect. Banton aptly presents the deterrent effects of the presence of an officer as such;

> "The constable finds that he needs to do or say very little, the mere presence of the man in the blue uniform being sometimes sufficient to make people stop fighting" (1964, 227).

Within such a consensual society, there is less reason for internal controls, in-group solidarity or hostility towards the public. In contrast, his observations

of urban America present a disordered, chaotic policing environment. Faced with rapid social change, civil unrest, and political upheaval, police officers worked in an unpredictable and dangerous policing environment. In contrast to the harmonious picture depicted of the British police, Banton argues that American officers depend on the threat of coercion for compliance and as they close ranks against the public, hostility grows and solidarity becomes mutually enforcing. Crucially, Banton predicted that a similar situation would develop in Britain as society modernised and diversified leading to the collapse of the symbolic character of the police constable.

Critics of Banton's study argued that his attested distinctions between British and American police officers were overstated due to his research design, his failure to acknowledge negative activities of the Scottish police at the time of writing and his subsequent portrayal of the British constable as 'sacred'. In relation to sampling, Banton compares policing in a rural, Scottish community with low levels of serious crime, with that within large American cities occupied with more heterogeneous, diverse communities and with radically different policing requirements. Skolnick (1966) asserts, "The contrast between policing in the UK (consensus) and the US (conflict) was so absolute because Banton did not include any discussion of organic police work in middle America". In addition to methodological concerns, Banton has also been criticised for his failure to refer to the situations in which officers might be subject to provocation, or to whether police –public relations were good, bad, better or worse (McLaughlin, 2007). McLaughlin (ibid) argues that the study ignores the differential application of the law or malpractice; news reports of assaults against officers, disciplinary charges and police scandals, such as the Thurso case of 1959, and therefore fails to reflect the realities of urban policing at the time of the research. The third criticism levelled at Banton relates to his symbolisation of the police officer as sacred. Clark (1965) argues that this notion is not held up to an analysis of police/public relations or a public perspective of the police even though that was one of his original intentions.

Despite such criticism, Banton's findings have particular resonance within the context of the current study for three key reasons. Firstly, Banton asserted from the outset that in order to understand the police officer in action there is a need to acquire knowledge beyond formal systems of law and police procedures, (Chatterton, 1995). As such, Banton introduces us to the importance of informal mechanisms used by police in exercising social control, the accumulation of which has since become referred to as the informal craft (skills) of policing. Understanding how such informal craft skills influence PCSO decision making and techniques is an essential element to understanding PCSOs in action. Secondly, a key objective of Banton's study was to understand the visible and routine peacekeeping functions of the police rather than being solely concerned with law enforcement. Peacekeeping is a central aspect of the role of PCSOs due to their limited powers of enforcement and intended mandate. In seeking to understand routine activities, Banton argues that it was "the problems of this kind of work [patrol] and the attitudes to which it gives rise that most characterise the culture of police work as an occupation", (1964, 27). Thirdly, within his analysis of police decision making, Banton emphasises the importance of understanding the informal rules, accepted norms and values that shape decisions made and subsequent action taken by officers – what might now be conceived as constitutive elements of the police culture.
This study also seeks to understand the role played by informal rules, norms and values in shaping cultural characteristics held by PCSOs.

In reaction to Banton's achievements, research into the police occupation proliferated from the late 1960s at a time when the perceived 'golden age' of policing was coming to an end (McLaughlin, 2007). As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the harmonious relationship between the police and the public could no longer be sustained as the realities of police work became exposed and the legitimacy of the police became increasingly questioned (Reiner, 2000). Subsequent sociological studies of the police, whilst intellectually influenced by Banton, were more sceptical in their approach shaped by growing social and political unrest, police corruption and the abuse of police powers and discretion, tending instead to

focus on what had gone badly within policing. Discussions of police culture, particularly those providing a universal understanding of police culture, have been firmly placed within this trend, (Paoline 2003, Foster, 2003). It is to such conceptions that the following section concerns itself.

The Notion of a Universal Police Culture

Sociological accounts of a monolithic police culture argue that police officers develop specific attitudes, values and norms in relation to their work as a means of coping with the strains and demands of police work, often referred to the occupational environment, and the scrutiny of police management and supervision, referred as the organisational environment (Paoline, 2003). Manning defines police culture as the "core skills, cognitions, and affect which define 'good police work'…which includes accepted practices, rules and principles of conduct that are situationally applied and generalised rationales and beliefs", (1989, 360). Accounts seeking to present a universal police culture have looked towards these shared attitudes, principles and beliefs that emanate from shared expectations and experiences to inform conduct and decision making.

The Origins of the Traditional Police Culture

Jerome Skolnick's classic study 'Justice Without Trial' (1966) was one of the first studies to document the ways in which the experience of police work contributes to the construction of police occupational norms and a shared police culture. Skolnick argues that the unique role and responsibilities held by police officers combined with the unique features of their working environment leads to a 'working personality' of the police officer that cannot be found in other occupations. Skolnick, (1966, 42) asserts that, "the police, as a result of combined features of their social situation, tend to develop ways of looking at the world distinctive to themselves". The process of developing a working personality is summarised by Skolnick as follows: 'the policeman's role contains two principal variables, danger and authority, which should be interpreted in light of a 'constant' pressure to appear

efficient'. Whilst Skolnick does not claim that all police are alike in their working personality, he suggests that these elements represent distinctive cognitive tendencies that are found to a greater or lesser extent within all police officers due to their shared occupational remit and it is the combination of the three elements that are unique to the police.

Skolnick (1966) acknowledges that whilst the strength of the working personality differs depending upon police specialism, duty and specific working conditions, the working personality is most highly developed amongst the police officer on the beat. The constabulary role becomes a rite of passage for all officers whereby "every officer of rank must serve an apprenticeship as a patrolman", (Skolnick, 1966, 44). It is working on the beat where the working personality is initiated and at its strongest since officers face danger, authority and efficiency on a recurrent basis. Whilst a sense of authority and a pressure to be efficient might be strongly felt amongst senior officers within the organisation, the element of danger in terms of risk to safety is lacking and officers are therefore not exposed to the same combination of elements. Therefore, when Skolnick asserts that these elements within the police working personality are unique to the police, he is limiting this assertion to operational police officers working on the ground.

Danger is an omnipresent reality for the operational police officer. The officer isolates himself from society, both from those he or she deems potentially dangerous, and the majority, respectable society to whom he or she identifies, and becomes suspicious and distrustful towards members of the public as a means of managing this threat to his safety. Rubenstein, (1973) provides support to Skolnick's notion of suspiciousness as a non-social attribute adopted by officers in order to further their ability to do their work. His account of the policeman's stare, as utilised by officers in his study of patrol work, operates as a means of asserting power and authority and as a means of self-protection from their exposure to danger;

> "Whatever others may think he is looking for, when he [the officer] stares at someone he is expressing his special rights as a policeman…He knows too, that it is unsettling to be stared at; but he

need fear no reprimand…It is his way of telling those people at whom he is looking of his claims on their behaviour in public", (Rubenstein, 1973, 221 in Crank, 2004, 146).

Public hostility and feelings of being taken for granted breeds resentment amongst officers to the extent that they become isolated from the public. Instead of being seen as a 'citizen in uniform', officers are viewed as part of a faceless collective that is somewhat distinct from the ordinary citizenry. The very symbolism inherent within the police uniform distinguishes police officers from the rest of the population, (Waddington, 1999) to the extent that 'to be liked by people on the street is the sign of a bad cop' (ibid, p292). The danger within the police role, however, not only isolates the officer from the public, but also draws officers together to create reassurance of protection when in need. This is aptly illustrated by Skolnick in his discussion of diversions from due process or misconduct; "patrolmen may support their fellows over what they regard as minor infractions in order to demonstrate to them they will be loyal", (Skolnick, 1966, 53). Having a strong sense of solidarity is not only essential as a coping mechanism for officers when faced with the danger associated with the role, but is also important if officers are to be efficient.

The requirement to respond to danger and violence is such that in order to try and predict which persons present the greatest risk to the officer and others and to satisfy the continual pressure to produce, police develop what Skolnick (1966) refers to as the 'symbolic assailant'; a profile of persons whose appearance, gestures or demeanour, come to represent an indicator of violence, irrespective of whether the person actually uses violence. On their introduction into the organisation, officers are encouraged to be suspicious, to identify the abnormal, and to gather information on people at risk of offending in a way that supports the construction of the symbolic assailant. The categorisation of individual members of the public by police has been well documented elsewhere; Cain, (1973) talks about the 'respectable' and the 'roughs', the latter threatening the police officer's role and authority, whilst Young (1991) demonstrates the use of derogatory labels

such as ‘prigs’ and ‘scumbags’ by officers when referring to suspects or prisoners. Van Maanen (1974) comparably documents similar practices conducted by American police officers in identifying ideal types of individuals; ‘suspicious persons’, ‘assholes’ and ‘know nothings’, to whom the police will treat differently according to the level of perceived threat they present. Whilst subject to situational, temporal and individual subjective interpretations of the officer, Van Maanen explains that those labelled as ‘asshole’, are deemed to threaten the moral order, become targeted by police and are more likely to receive ‘street justice’. For Reiner, (1992) the working personality draws upon particular views of the social structure to segregate individuals deemed as ‘police property’ and ‘respectable’ sections of the community, thus leading officers to define individuals and situations in particular ways depending upon their perceived social status.

Skolnick’s notion of the ‘working personality’ as a characteristic of the police subculture has not only endured over time, but has prompted psychological studies to question whether certain types of individuals are attracted to the role of a police officer due to the danger and authority within role or whether police officers are predisposed to certain types of attitudes and behaviours due to a police personality. However, an important distinction needs to be made between the term ‘police personality’ and ‘working personality’ as used by Skolnick; police personality implies attitudes are individually composed and are somewhat external to the organisation, whereas ‘working personality’ places emphasis upon the activity of ‘working’ in its construction, that the personality is shaped by the exigencies of the occupation. The most common assumption tested is that of authoritarianism, involving conventionalism, cynicism, power and aggression towards those who violate conventional values, (Balch, 1972, in Brogden, Jefferson and Walklate, 1988, 14). Coleman and Gorman’s study of 1982, in comparing recruit constables, probationer constables and the general population in Britain according to scales representing conservative, dogmatic and authoritarian attitudes and behaviours, conclude that the police force does attract conservative and authoritarian personalities, and assert that the longer an individual is a police officer, the more likely it is that he or she will

express conservative and authoritarian attitudes, (Coleman and Gorman, 1982, 1). Conversely, Bayley and Mendelsohn's (1969) and Niederhoffer's research (1967) in the US showed that neither police recruits nor serving policemen had personalities that were demonstrably more authoritarian. Instead, Niederhoffer (ibid) suggests that police officers may be transformed into authoritarian personalities due to the nature of the police role. Cynicism is therefore an outcome of the frequency with which officers coming into contact with dishonest people to the extent that officers tend to perceive everyone, encouraged by the positive attribute of suspicion in police work, as corrupt. Drawing upon an interview with a detective, Niederhoffer (1967, 95) explains, "I am convinced that we are turning into a nation of thieves. I have sadly concluded that nine out of ten persons are dishonest". Similarly, Van Maanen (1978a) provides a convincing counter argument suggesting officer cynicism is derived from the fact that police are tasked to do society's dirty work and to uphold a certain morality,

> "After a few years on the street, there are few accounts patrolmen have not heard. Hence, whether a claim is outrageous or plausible, police react by believing nothing and distrusting everything at the same time", (ibid, 120).

Evidence of an authoritarian police personality is therefore mixed. Studies identifying predisposition often lack validity and reliability due to inconsistencies in techniques of measurement, use of control groups to compare and sample sizes. Despite inconsistent evidence, the notion that attitudinal tendencies, and therefore cultural characteristics, develop amongst officers as a learned response to the occupation and the police organization rather than as particular personality traits is of greatest relevance to this study.

Despite Skolnick's contribution to an understanding of police culture, his work has been challenged on the basis that he provides too much focus on police officers acting within the legal system at the expense of gaining knowledge of patrol activities. Bordua argues that in so doing Skolnick dismisses the importance of distinguishing between the patrolman as a

‘peace officer’ and a ‘law’ officer, (Bordua, 1967). In contrast, Maureen Cain’s (1973) analysis of role conceptions of rural and urban officers and the underlying features and effects of police work (1979, in Holdaway, 1989) sought to discover the source of the police officer’s worldview. Cain argued that previous sociological studies of the police provide ‘the icing sugar on the cake’ without an understanding of, “the chemical processes which make the cake of policing”, (ibid, 57); that is, they neglect to understand the essence of police work and the underlying realities under which officers operate.

Cain’s comparative study of police officers within an English force utilised a questionnaire survey with police officers and their wives combined with short periods of observation of officers operating with urban and rural divisions. Cain presents lower ranked officer’s perceptions of their role as one of crime fighting, particularly within urban areas, whereupon making an arrest is not only an indicator of good policing, but something that rank and file officers pursue due to their need for action. Cain explains that the relationship between the multiple roles of an officer; law enforcer, peace officer, community advocate, and the ways in which such roles are differentially interpreted by role definers – community, family, senior officers, and colleagues, shapes the individual role conception and consequent action. Rural officers, although not entirely integrated, were found to have more in common with the people they policed than did urban officers and since they were more regularly engaged in non-disciplinary contact with the public, enjoyed greater public co-operation than their urban counterparts. Unlike their rural counterparts, urban officers had fewer opportunities for interdependence with the public, spent more time together, were subject to peer group pressure and interdependence culminating in “a well developed, essentially protective occupational culture” (Cain, 1973, 67). For Cain therefore, police culture establishes itself in a climate of lower levels of police-community interdependence and a consequence of greater, more challenging demands in police work within the policing of urban spaces.

The Dominance of Crime Fighting within the Police Culture

Technical innovations in policing, such as the mobilisation of patrol and changes in urban policing strategies, meant that studies began to examine the broader complexities of the police role and its relationship to police culture. As elucidated by Punch (1979a, 117), "the role of the police deserves inspection as a multi-faceted social control agency serving multiple ends and various audiences", implying a need for studies to secure an understanding of the drivers to police action, i.e. which ends are prioritised, how this imparts upon the service they provide to the law-abiding public and action taken in their dealings with the non-abiding public, for example, stereotyping and over-policing certain sections of society.

Whilst previous studies focused on the police officer as law enforcer or crimefighter (Skolnick, 1966, Banton, 1964) Punch and Naylor (1973) sought to explore the impact of broader aspects of the police role – service functions – upon police action and culture. They argue that due to the being perceived as the fourth emergency service and the authority they wield, the public often turn to the police in the first instance for help in a vast array of situations and are thus expected to act as a 'gatekeeping' service for the transferral of information before other social services intervene. Drawing upon analysis of calls from the public over an 82 hour period within three Essex towns, Punch and Naylor (ibid) found that service calls made up for 49% in a new town, 61% in an old established town, and 73% in a country town with a rural area. The role demanded by service calls does not survive into the occupational culture due to ambiguity in relation to public expectations. Punch, (1979a) argues that the police are incapable of coping with the ambivalence associated with being both a police 'service' and a police 'force' and in consequence, police deny legitimacy to the 'social work' aspects of the police role due to its low status, lack of official rewards and time consuming nature, preferring the masculine, more exciting, and organisationally valued role definition of crime fighter. The incongruence between police perceptions of their role and the problems they face – primarily of crime fighting and enforcement – has been documented

elsewhere, and where partnerships with other agencies occur, police tend to co-operate in pursuit of their own interests, (Cummings et al, 1964, Crawford, 1997, Squires and Measor, 2001).

Police work may therefore impact upon the police culture, but it is only specific aspects of police work that are more easily defined in terms of public expectations and more sympathetic to the image of police as crime fighters (Manning, 1978, Reiner, 2000, McLaughlin, 2007) that are emphasised and transmitted into the culture. The rejection of social service functions has relevance to the current study since the community engagement ethos of PCSOs embodies precisely those service aspects of the police culture that police officers typically try to deny and avoid, in favour of crime and disorder related activities. In undertaking service functions of the police that are denied from the occupational culture, police officers might deny PCSOs equal status due to their inability to contribute towards crime fighting objectives of the organisation. Indeed, Savage (2003) and Chan (1996, 1997) provide testimony to the potential for entrenched norms and attitudes of police to act as obstacles to police reform and modernisation.

Whilst recognising the positive value of police culture as a means of coping with the often dangerous and unpredictable nature of police work (Skolnick, 1966, Westley, 1970, Van Maanen, 1974, Reiner, 2000, Crank, 2004 and Paoline, 2006), Punch's three year long study conducted within the Warmoesstraat in Amsterdam (1979b) demonstrates the negative connotations of culture and the realities of police work upon practice. Providing cross cultural evidence of the role-defining value of crimefighting within the police culture, Punch (1979b) identifies the central role that shared informal understandings, values and beliefs play in shaping police role definitions, outlooks and behaviour towards people. Working in an area where the relationship between the police and underworld was characterised by mutually agreed co-operation and conflict, Punch demonstrates how police officers, like the policed, are concerned with day-to-day survival whereupon professional standards of policing bear little relation to the practice demanded of them, and where the law itself is used as a weapon to

guarantee officers survival (Brogden, 1982; 498). As such, Punch explains that rules are broken in pursuit of a 'modus vivandi' for both the community and police to co-exist, and in pursuit of control, police officers form a defensive, protective and isolating culture to assert their dominance. His representation of the culture of the lower ranks in the Warmoesstraat is characterised as hedonistic, crime focused, routinely pursuing the 'symbolic assailants' and the dismissal of peace-keeping functions. The culture is therefore portrayed as a resource for tackling the demanding issues prevalent in the area in which they police.

Brogden (1982) however expresses concern that the study fails to contextualise the research site and the structural constraints operating within the Dutch police occupation at the time. Holdaway (1983) offers similar reservations on the consistency of Punch's discussion on the unique nature of the study, questioning the relevance and transferability of his study to American and/or British material of the occupational culture. In response, Holdaway asserts that a more detailed comparative analysis could have been made in relation to the integration of his study into previous cultural research. What is however more difficult to contest is the contribution of the study in highlighting the derisory and exclusionary aspects of a dominant police culture in the daily routines of officers in an area where primary emphasis of the police relationship with the community is placed upon control over support, (Cummings et al, 1964).

Research into the occupational culture of the police thereafter emphasised the use of sustained observation to uncover working rules employed by officers on routine patrol and to conceptualise the relationship between the police organisation and the wider social environment, particularly the use of power, class and domination, (Holdaway 1989). Concerned with the workings of the patrol officers under the fixed points system and the gap between formal organisational rules and work practices, Chatterton's two year study conducted in a force in the North of England in 1979 examined the social processes involved in pursuit of arrest objectives in police work (Chatterton, 1979). The fixed points system was a style of

patrol practice that divided patrol officers up into footbeats that rotated over a six week period set up in order to achieve rational deployment of available manpower. Officers were required to keep within their patrol-variation to support monitoring of their activities and to reach a certain point on their beat at specified times in order to make contact with their supervising sergeant. Like officers documented by Cain (1973) and Punch, (1979b) Chatterton describes how officers were propelled by the crime fighting role and by the search for a 'good prisoner',

> "anything and anyone out of the ordinary had to be investigated because it might produce a good prisoner- a worthwhile arrest, apprehension, key intelligence towards an arrest" (Chatterton, 1979, 89).

However, this commitment to crime work encouraged and enabled infringements of the system since conforming to the rules and securing points meant that they might miss an arrest by not following their instinct or investigating something they deemed suspicious. Due to the potential for deviation from organisational rules, officers developed shared understandings in conducting their work to avoid scrutiny by their superiors. Similar to Van Maanen's (1974) 'cover your ass' characteristic of the culture, Chatterton's 'good story' maxim demonstrates this division, "Always make sure you have a good story to cover yourself for everything you do, both on and off duty. Unless you have a good story, don't do it", (ibid, 94) whereby justice becomes about justifying action. Shared understandings between officers were focused on 'getting the job done', to pursue crime work and avoid trouble; a clear working rule of the shared culture.

The centrality of crime fighting and action within the police culture was also a feature of Holdaway's (1983) work. Unlike Chatterton's emphasis on rule deviation, Holdaway was focused upon the meanings of phenomena which form the occupational culture separating rule-based and typification based notions of the occupational culture. Drawing upon Cain's work, Holdaway (ibid) identifies control as a fundamental police task providing an inevitable identity being formed by officers as representing the 'thin blue line' between order and chaos, whereby law and policy are reworked depending

on whether they resonate with the themes of the occupational culture (ibid, 65). Holdaway, like Manning (1977) and Skolnick (1966), clearly acknowledges the link between culture and practice, but calls for greater precision in studies to uncover the 'contours of the culture', specifically understanding those aspects of the occupational culture that are under or over determined by external structures. Building upon both Schutz's (1973, in Holdaway, 1983) phenomenology and associated notion of 'commonsense knowledge' and Silverman (1970)'s definition of an organisation; Holdaway sought to better understand the central and peripheral relevancies of the occupational culture.

Supported by his position as a police officer at the time of his research, Holdaway conducted a covert participant observational study in the hope of 'piercing their protective shield' (1989) from within,, gathering as much data on as many officers in as many different contexts as he was able, including the routine and seemingly insignificant (Holdaway,1983,11). Reflecting the work of his predecessors, Holdaway reports evidence of a number of shared cultural characteristics. In support of Skolnick (1966) and Van Maanen (1978) he provides evidence of police isolation and an 'us and them' perspective involving categorisation of individuals who threaten the legitimacy and autonomy of the police. Holdaway however, identifies the categorisation of the public into stereotyped groups beyond the suspect or 'police property', including for example, 'challengers' to refer to professionals, such as doctors, lawyers, social workers, who threaten to challenge police control, and 'disarmers' to refer to people who are difficult to deal with, such as suspects, victims or witnesses or those vulnerable elements of society. What Holdaway offers therefore, unlike previous works on culture, in line with Manning (1977, 1978, 2005) is an insight into the efforts made by police in protecting their status as 'guardians of symbolic order', and shielding interference from the public. However, it is within the cultural characteristic of racial prejudice that Holdaway provides additional insight.

Racism and Sexism within the Police Culture

Whilst recognised in early police studies (Bayley and Mendelsohn, 1968, Westley, 1970, Cain, 1973) the issue of prejudice had hereto tended to be superseded by research concerns in relation to role, function and structure within previous cultural research. Cain (1973, 117) was one of the first to conclude that there was a clear pattern of prejudice amongst the rank and file whereby black people were perceived as 'unpredictable' and 'dangerous' causing them to be subjected to increased suspicion and to be especially prone to police violence. Nonetheless, Holdaway's research (1983), conducted at a time when the political climate was becoming more sensitive to prejudice, police malpractice and the over-policing of minority groups, has added weight to evidence suggesting widespread prejudice amongst the rank-and -file. Whilst critical of the way in which the concept of police culture has typically been framed, Waddington (1999a, 101) asserts that, "there is compelling evidence to support the view that the police – especially the lower ranks – are hostile to racial and ethnic minorities". Despite widespread agreement of racial prejudice within the police force, what is hotly disputed is validity in assertions that expressed racial prejudice translates into behaviour on the street. As demonstrated by Holdaway (1983) and Shearing and Ericson (1991), there is a gap between police talk, specifically in relation to prejudiced attitudes, and action whereby the telling of stories exaggerates behaviour. Smith and Gray's (1985) study in London was instrumental in drawing attention to sexism, heavy use of alcohol and racial prejudice, but was one of the first to question the link between police talk and behaviour. Their two year study involved observation of and formal and informal interviews with officers and analysis of internal police documents. They argue, "our first impression after being attached to groups of police officers was that racialist language and racial prejudice were prominent…on accompanying these officers as they went about their work we found that their relations with black and brown people were often relaxed and friendly", (Smith and Gray, 1985, iv, 109). Whilst not condoning such language and prejudice, Smith and Gray (1985, 127-128) do acknowledge the purposeful use of racialist talk in reinforcing 'the identity, security and

solidarity of the group against a clearly perceived external threat'. Chan, (1997) in drawing upon findings of the PSI report (Smith and Gray, 1985) develops this instrumental role of racist language in cementing group solidarity, argues that although it was the minority of officers who expressed bitter racist talk;

> "they were responsible for shaping the norms and setting the expectations of the group, to such an extent that officers who were not prejudiced had come to adopt the racist language in conformity to the group", (1997, 34).

Waddington (1999b) is perhaps one of the strongest critiques of the attested relationship between what officers say, and what officers do. In light of the discrepancy identified by Smith and Gray (1985) and in drawing upon support from a range of studies (Sykes and Brent, 1983 in Waddington, 1999b, 288, Worden, 1996, in Waddington, 288) Waddington (ibid, 288) instead testifies to the importance of contextual variables, such as the seriousness of the offence, rather than the influence of the police subculture in determining police action. Whilst condemnatory, it could be argued that stereotypes occur as a result of the social structural context of police work, the need to execute the preferred crimefighting police mandate and the organisational pressure to appear productive (Skolnick, 1966). Even so, although improvements are being made to encourage diversity within the police service, at both sworn (Bowling and Phillips 2003) and civilian levels (Johnston, 2006) the composition of police officers within England and Wales specifically remains disproportionately white and male (Bullock and Mulchandani, 2009).

The gendered nature of police work has been well documented within recent police research (Smith and Gray, 1985, Fielding, 1994, Heidensohn, 1992, Walklate, 2001, and Westmarland, 2001a), whereby masculine values are both a by-product and an influence on the internal police culture. Fielding (1994) identifies masculine features of the stereotyped police culture, including aggression and physical action, competition, misogynistic attitudes towards women, and rigid in-group/out-group distinctions. Smith and Gray

(1985) suggested that much of the observed banter between officers “sought to define and affirm male dominance within the organisation and to affirm its association with aggression and strength”, (in Brown, 1992, 309). The police task itself requires physical strength, being able to ‘handle yourself’ and to face danger in order to enforce the law, all of which are deemed as masculine attributes Women, on the other hand, are not only regarded as being unable to successfully embody these attributes, (Holdaway, 1983, Westmarland, 2001a), but threaten the very nature of the ‘crimefighting’ orientation emphasised within the culture, and according to Martin (1989), risk exposing the reality that most policing does not involve fights and physical danger and that order can be maintained by non-physical means. Since stereotypical masculinity is unlikely to find much room for expression within the ‘social service’ aspects of policing (Punch and Naylor, 1973), women have traditionally been pigeon-holed as being most suitable to work within either departments involving women and children, (Heidensohn, 1992), or clerical and administrative work. There is a sense that if women must insist on joining routine patrol they are differentially treated as a consequence of their gender, being less likely to engage in public order situations and less able to “collect a portfolio of good arrests” (Fielding, 1994, 57). In consequence, it is important to acknowledge the potential impact of this ‘hegemonic masculinity’ (ibid) inherent within police work, and therefore the associated culture, upon female PCSOs entering the police force and their integration into the organisation. Whilst the PCSO role has been examined as a means of increasing diversity with the police service (Johnston, 2006), PCSOs are more likely to engage in softer policing, to be less concerned with enforcement and more concerned with community contact – roles and associated activities that are downgraded within the masculine, crime fighting ideology of the occupational culture. Therefore, male PCSOs may be excluded as a consequence of their limited capacity to feed into crime control activities of the organisation, but female PCSOs may potentially be excluded even further due to their gender.

Summary

By the end of the 1980s research on the occupational culture had pursued critical directions identifying and condemning a range of negative attributes of the 'dominant' police culture, including the narrow role definition of 'crime-fighting', stereotyping of certain sections of the public, and the routine rule breaking or lack of professionalism shown by officers in pursuit of crime control. Reflecting upon previous observational studies of the police, Reiner (1992a, 2000) summarises a number of core characteristics of the dominant police culture. These characteristics become internalised and expressed in three ways; firstly, through police perceptions and philosophies of their role and mandate, secondly, within perspectives regarding how to execute this role and associated duties and thirdly, through their dealings with the public.

In terms of role and mandate, studies overwhelmingly suggest that officers develop a sense of mission and a love of action, (Skolnick, 1966, Cain, 1973, Holdaway, 1979, 1983, 1999, Chatterton, 1979, Smith and Gray, 1985). Such role definitions result in a narrow crimefighting role perception and promote within officers a moral imperative that they are indispensible in protecting and serving the public. Such beliefs serve to foster a pessimistic and cynical worldview that encourages suspicion. Identified cultural characteristics that impact upon dealings with the public include two strands. The first includes features of isolation/solidarity, inherent in the works of Skolnick, (1966), Van Maanen (1973) and Punch, (1979b), which encourage the development of police stereotypes and an 'us vs them' attitude between the police and the public. Secondly, machismo/sexism (Fielding, 1994, Heidensohn 1992, Westmarland 2001a) can dominate cultural attitudes due to resistance to change and the perceived threat that women present to the nature of police work. Racial prejudice can result as a consequence of police stereotypes, and as such, can lead to the disproportionate targeting of minority groups (Foster, Newburn and Souhami, 2005). Reiner (1992a, 2000) also identifies the additional notion of 'pragmatism' as a core characteristic of the dominant culture, (Crank, 2004). Related to a resistance to change, this concept postulates that officers are

> "concerned to get from here to tomorrow (or the next hour) safety and with the least fuss and paperwork, which has made them reluctant to contemplate innovation, experimentation, or research" (Reiner, 2000, 101).

Emphasis is thus placed upon 'getting the job done' and securing results. Whilst it is worth noting that advancements in police tactics and strategies have placed an emphasis on partnership working, intelligence led policing and problem-solving (Tilley, 2003), it is documented that the rank and file reject top-down reform efforts and revert to traditional or more pragmatic policing, (Rowe, 2004).

It is however within the aspects of pragmatism and the authority and danger inherent in the police mandate that the functional benefits of shared beliefs, attitudes and principles of conduct can be appreciated. As Manning (1994, 5, in Paoline, 2003, 202) explains, "as an adaptive modality, the occupational culture mediates external pressures and demands and the internal expectations for performance and production". Aspects of culture can function as 'coping mechanisms' to enable officers to conduct their unique role in a hostile working environment whereby the importance of trust and group solidarity cannot be overstated since officers depend on one another for physical and emotional protection, (Manning, 2005, Paoline, 2003). Conflict, as recognised by Skolnick (1966), Van Maanen (1974) and Brown, (1988), is also directed at officers from within the organisation itself. As asserted by Brown, (1988, 9),

> "What must be recognized is that patrolmen lead something of a schizophrenic existence: they must cope not only with the terror of an often hostile and unpredictable citizenry, but also with a hostile – even tyrannical – and unpredictable bureaucracy".

Studies in support of a monolithic police culture emphasise the influence of the unique police role and mandate and the demands of working within a hostile and demanding environment. Those in support of a shared culture, for example, Crank, (2004, 26) argues, "street cops everywhere tend to share a common culture because they respond to similar audiences

everywhere" implying that the very nature of the police task inevitably involves coercion and control and therefore conflict (Reiner, 2000). This notion of a homogenous, stable culture is supported by Skolnick and Fyfe (1994) in their observation of policing within the United States, Europe and Asia, leading them to the similar claim that the police culture is stable throughout time due to the defining features of the police role. However, critics such as Manning, (1995), Chan (1996), Herbert (1998) and Paoline (2003) have argued that the police occupational culture is not homogenous and that such accounts, "fail to acknowledge differences, internal tensions, contradictions and paradoxes" (Manning, 1994, 4 in Paoline, 2003, 204) both within the police mandate and within the organisation itself. It is the potential for variation within the organisational culture and the fragmentation of cultural attitudes that the next section concerns itself.

Variation in Occupational and Organisational Culture

Holdaway (1995, 111) asserts that,

> "although changes in police policy, in technology, in law and personnel have occurred I would continue to argue that when one looks at the working practices of the lower ranks relatively little has changed".

This implied absence of change suggests that the central characteristics of the police culture have been preserved. There is some substance to his view when we consider that it is the lower ranks who are required to interpret and implement legislation and policy and to do so in accordance to what they consider to be 'good' or 'real' police work, (McConville, Sanders and Leng, 1991). Contrary to those who advocate a shared police culture, other studies have shown that officers do not always endorse the police mandate as promulgated through the police culture (Fielding, 1988, Chan, 1996). Instead, officers construct cultural attitudes, working rules and accepted behaviour depending upon individual experience and their own orientations to their role, relationships with others in the organisation and the organisational and

political climate in which they work. This section will explore the development of a growing body of literature that identifies variation within cultural characteristics within the police organisation. It is structured in three parts. The first examines the development of officer typologies in understanding variations in orientations to police work. The second explores studies documenting variations in organisational culture, and the third, examines perspectives that offer a more nuanced, appreciative approach to police culture and police reform.

Officer typologies

From the late 1970s onwards there were a number of influential studies conducted in both the United States and England and Wales that challenged the notion of a universal police culture (Muir, 1977, Broderick, 1977, Reiner, 1978). Rather than suggesting that all officers share distinct cultural characteristics, these studies report individual variation in officer attitudes and approaches to police work providing officer typologies as a framework for understanding such differences. Whilst each of these typologies offers a 'type' of officer who holds a worldview similar to that promoted by traditional representations of police culture, their importance lies in the role of the individual and the competing perspectives officers attach to their role and experience of police work.

Muir's (1977) groundbreaking study presented a theoretical framework for distinguishing police officers according to the way in which they dealt with citizens, including their handling of coercive power. Indicative of a more appreciative trend within police research, Muir's emphasis was to identify 'what makes an officer good?' as opposed to focusing attention upon deviation from rules and due process. As a political scientist, Muir drew upon Weber's professional political model of the 'mature man' and his four characteristics of professionalism; understanding human conduct, a comprehension of human suffering, sensitivity to an individual's dignity and a more general faith in human nature. Crucially, Muir (1977, 50) argues that it is the existence of the two virtues of passion or morality and perspective that

affect an individual officer's worldview and the way in which he/she approaches coercion and their potential for corruption and/or cynicism. Moral understanding may be 'integrated' whereby coercion is contained within a moral code or 'conflictual' since it does not adhere to basic moral principles. Similarly, there are two dimensions within the virtue of perspective; it may be 'cynical' in terms of being based on a 'us and them' dualism with the public or 'tragic' whereby mankind is perceived as one unitary substance and where moral values incorporating a view of action are perceived as being motivated by chance and circumstance, (Reiner, 2000).

Based on in-depth interviews and observations with twenty-eight rank and file officers from an American force in California, Muir identifies a typology of four types of police officer. The 'Avoider' describes an officer with a 'cynical' perspective and 'conflictual' morality who shirks duties, the 'Enforcer' who has a 'cynical' perspective but an 'integrated' morality acting without understanding of the need for restraint, the 'Reciprocator' who has a 'tragic' perspective and who hesitates to use coercive power when needed, and the 'Professional' who has a tragic perspective and an integrated morality. The 'Professional' represents the 'good cop'; an officer who uses coercion in a principled way, utilising other means to encourage compliance and resolve problems without coercion by being able to combine passion with perspective and to resolve the contradictions in the police role. Apart from the 'Professional', the three types of officer are unable to reconcile the virtues of passion and perspective in response to their complex role demands, (Polombo, 1995). The 'Enforcer' typifies the perspective more closely aligned to that presented in traditional police cultural studies whereby the relationship between the police and the public is presented as a 'us and them' dualism and the police role is one of crimefighting designed to put the "bad asses in jail" and with service tasks being considered as 'bullshit' police work, (Muir, 1977, 25).

Through emersion in the occupational world of officers, Muir reveals the contradictory and competing officer styles adopted by officers in their approaches to police work. However, despite conducting observations of police action, Muir only speculated that attitudinal differences would lead to

corresponding differences in behaviour and therefore, unlike traditional police cultural studies, fails to demonstrate the manifestation of competing perspectives into behaviour. The reliability of his findings has also been questioned. Although utilising the same methodology as Muir (1977), Snipes and Mastrofski, (1990) were unsuccessful in their attempts to replicate these findings.

Nonetheless, during the time that Muir was conducting his seven year study, other similar studies emerged providing similar typologies to explain distinct operational types of police officers. Whilst also seeking to understand how officers adapt to their occupational environment, Broderick (1977) was additionally concerned the value officers placed upon social order and due process. Drawing upon survey findings, interviews and participant with 109 officers, Broderick identifies officer types similar to those identified by Muir; Muir's 'Professional', which he labels the 'Optimist', the 'Avoider' labelled as the 'Realist', the 'Enforcer' is given the same label, and the 'Reciprocator', labelled as the 'Idealist'. The 'Enforcer' and 'Idealist' are typified by feelings of resentment, whereas the 'Realist' and 'Optimist' are distinct by their parallel levels of commitment with the latter being enthusiastic and committed to the cause of 'good policing', (Broderick, 1979).

Reflecting upon findings to his study 'The Blue Coated Worker' (1978), Reiner (2000) assesses the trends in police typology research and identifies clear parallels across officer typologies. Drawing upon in depth interviews with rank and file officers, Reiner (1978) sought to explore differing orientations to work, rationales for becoming a police officer, job satisfaction and relationships with others within the organisation. Corresponding findings led to the identification of four officer types; 'the Bobby' as the epitome of the ordinary officer applying the law with common sense, the cynical 'Uniform Carrier' who shirks work whenever possible, the 'New Centurion' who is dedicated to preserving 'the thin blue line' and detective work as the essence of police work, and the 'Professional' who adopts a measured view of policing, placing value on a vast array of policing functions and who is more likely to progress to the higher ranks, (Reiner,

1978). It is the officer style of the 'Professional', consistently identified by studies as the officer who possesses good judgement, knowledge and a reasoned use of coercion that typifies the 'good cop'. A reasonable deduction from these typologies is that the 'Professional' officer is he or she who is able to balance the needs of the community and the organisation, who is less inclined to be suspicious and cynical and to adhere to a strict crime fighting orientation to work as compared to the old style crime fighter who embodies many of the values of the traditional occupational culture, (Paoline, 2001). However, according to Mastrofski et al's (2002) research amongst officers working within a police department which at the time of writing had implemented a community oriented style of policing, only one fifth of officers – categorised as 'Professionals' in a similar way to previous studies – "exhibited behaviour consistent with the leadership's ideal of how officers should deal with the public", compared to two fifths displaying "styles distinctly at odds with the departments ideal", (ibid, 106). Although there is no British research to suggest what proportion of officers would fall into the category of the 'Professional', such findings have important implications for the delivery of a more customer focused, ethical police service and the potential to improve confidence in the police (Chan, 1997). What cannot be ignored is that typological studies consistently tend to identify officers who hold values and/or orientations to work that support those of the traditional police culture. A recent study by Cochran and Bromley (2003), revealed three types of law enforcement orientations amongst sheriff deputies in the United States; 'sub-cultural adherents' supporting values of the traditional culture, 'COP (community oriented policing) Cops', strongly committed to public service, and 'Normals' who are not especially committed to each form.

In his assessment of officer typologies, Reiner (2000) argues that there is insufficient research evidence to suggest that officer style or approach to their role differs by ethnicity (Waddington, 1999b) or gender (Heidensohn, 1992). Martin (1980), however, does offer some insight into the differing orientations and effectiveness of female officers working within a Washington police department. Martin identifies two orientations to police work amongst female officers; POLICEwomen and policeWOMEN.

POLICEwomen were assertive, enforcement driven and whilst they expressed a desire to display empathy and compassion and a willingness to provide services beyond crime fighting, they stringently adhered to department policy (Polombo, 1995). Conversely, policeWOMEN demonstrated characteristics of stereotypical feminine police behaviour; adopting a service-oriented perspective, showed limited initiative in their role as enforcer and responding only to calls when dispatched. Martin (1980) asserts that policeWOMEN found patrol disconcerting, stressing physical limitations and a tendency to rely upon male officers to handle confrontation. Similarly, Young (1991; 240) identified examples of a 'new policewoman', comprising an estimated 10% of the female workforce, who "adopt a feminine competence which makes little concession to entrenched stereotypes". As with the other typologies, such a polarised view does little to appreciate individual differences, but they do imply the existence of a female police culture that is distinct from the dominant masculine culture.

The above studies, whilst varying in classifications and purpose, suggest that officers develop styles of working in response to their working environment in ways that can restrict the occupational culture. Van Maanen and Barley (1985, 44) refer to this process as 'ideological differentiation'; the experiences officers cope with produce stylistic differences and subcultures that share competing approaches towards "the nature of the work, the choice of appropriate techniques, the correct stance towards outsiders, or the best way to treat particular clients". Such typologies however are limited in their application to PCSOs due to their tendency to rely on approaches to law enforcement and coercion. Such an emphasis is atypical of the PCSO working environment due to role restrictions and their status as non-sworn officers.

Subcultural studies of private policing organisations may provide greater insight into the development of a PCSO subculture for three principal reasons. Firstly, both private security officers and PCSOs provide valuable contributions in the mixed economy of policing and occupy supplemental roles to the public police. Their marginal status within policing has the

potential to lead to similar occupational identities. Secondly, whilst able to exercise reasonable force when making a citizen's arrest, both private security officers and PCSOs hold limited powers of enforcement and a limited capacity to use coercive force. Thirdly, whilst private security officers are more likely to police private rather than public space, both PCSOs and private security officers have a shared remit for patrol, reassurance and crime prevention.

There is an emerging body of evidence to suggest that private security officers afforded policing functions hold high aspirations to become police officers frequently leading to their alignment with values of the traditional police culture (Micucci, 1998, Rigakos, 2002, Button, 2007). Rigakos' (2002) ethnographic study of a Toronto-based private security company identifies a widespread existence of a crime fighting 'wannabe' culture amongst private security officers. Drawing upon 126 hours of observations and 35 uniformed officers, Rigakos (ibid.) observes that almost all of the officers engaged in the study held strong aspirations of becoming police officers. Such aspirations led to disproportionate emphasis being placed upon gaining law enforcement experience within their role and measuring their success in the role against law enforcement ideals – 'good pinches', court testimony and crime control - over community engagement or service aspects of the role, transmitted through informal 'on-the-job' socialisation and storytelling (as explored by Shearing and Ericson, 1991, within the public police). This parapolicing mission "effectively permeates the private policing organisation in a very similar fashion to matching tendencies in public policing organisations" (Singh and Kempa, 2007, 301). The organisation supports this wannabe culture since it "buttress[es] the organization's commitment to professional law enforcement and send a message to security officers that they are supported" (Rigakos, ibid, 26). However, this wannabe culture and their limited capacity to engage in crime control frequently led to low morale, status frustration and a low orientation to the role due to its low status amongst the public and its limited capacity for enforcement.

The notion of a pervasive wannabe culture amongst private security officers is somewhat challenged by other empirical studies of private security

services (Miccucci, 1998 and Button, 2007). Based on 54 periods of observation with 36 private security officers working in an in-house unionised security force, Miccucci (1998) provides evidence of subcultural variation within private policing cultures. Classifying officers according to demographic characteristics, role orientation, attitudes to the public and peers, and job satisfaction, Micucci constructs a private policing typology incorporating three competing work styles amongst officers; guards, crime-fighters and bureaucratic cops. Guards, who tended to be older and more experienced in the role, adopted an orientation towards service and loss prevention and shared a positive and integrated attitude to the public. In contrast, crimefighters, as their name implies, tended to have a relatively short tenure in the job, were driven by crime control objectives and the excitement of a possible arrest, and adopted a negative and isolated attitude to the public. Bureaucratic cops displayed an orientation to the job that was a compromise between the former two positions; they tended to have had experience as police officers, emphasised both service and crime control, and developed a 'lukewarm' attitude to the public. As identified by Singh and Kempa (2007) private security officers engaged in Miccucci's study therefore demonstrate similar stratifications to those identified by Reiner (1978) within the public police; crimefighters (new centurions), guards (bobbies) and bureaucratic cops (uniform carriers).

Supporting evidence of subcultural variation within private policing can also be found within Button's (2007) case study of private security officers working within a retail leisure facility and a private organisation in the United Kingdom. Button (2007) argues that orientations of security officers fall under a continuum from watchmen at one end of the spectrum to parapolice at another depending upon the workplace they work in, organisational needs, specific tasks in which they are engaged and individual aspirations. Button, like Rigakos (2002) and Miccuci (1998) before him however, also identifies cultural characteristics that might have significance to the occupational experiences of PCSOs; a lack of commitment to the role driven by the low status of security work culminating in a 'wannabe culture', frustration with working conditions, feelings of solidarity, isolation and inferiority as a result of

the potential danger within the role, and elements of machismo, and widespread suspicion as a result of an endemic focus upon risk.

Studies of private policing subculture therefore demonstrate that where strong aspirations to become police officers lead are held by private security officers, occupational subcultures develop that are constructed shaped by elements contained within the traditional police culture; suspicion, isolation, solidarity and mutual assistance, love of action and masculinity. However, the limited capacity of these officers to engage in crime fighting however also leads to status frustration, low sense of value and low job satisfaction. Given Cooper et al's (2006) observations of the prevalence of PCSO aspirations to become police officers, there is significant potential for PCSOs to adopt similar orientations to work and subcultural characteristics as presented by Rigakos (2002), Miccucci (1998) and Button (2007). There is a potential for such aspirations, and the lack of value afforded to service aspects of policing within the traditional culture, to lead to greater levels of commitment to crime-fighting and romanticised notions of 'real police work' amongst PCSOs.

As a consequence of restrictions placed on involvement in criminal investigation, special constables have a greater capacity to be deployed within local communities for the purposes of visible foot patrols and public reassurance. Indeed, it is not uncommon for special constables to conduct patrols with PCSOs due to their complementary skills and capabilities; PCSOs sustained contact with local communities provides valuable local knowledge, whereas the special constable carries greater authority and capacity to encourage compliance and where necessary, enforce. Gill and Mawby's (1990) study of the special constable suggests that they may hold similar motivations to become engaged in policing as those held by PCSOs (Cooper et al, 2006). Gill and Mawby (ibid.) argue that specials have a volunteer culture that arises out of shared core values, commitment to the police organisation and a shared solidarity with colleagues from shared experience of police work. Those engaged in Gill and Mawby's study became specials to experience the excitement of police work, to learn about policing and importantly, for altruistic reasons. Those volunteering for

altruistic reasons tend to be older and stay in the role for longer, compared to younger volunteers who tend to be motivated by becoming a police officer. Like private security officers who hold strong aspirations to become police officers, younger, more ambitious specials are more likely to endorse the dominant culture.

However, despite their significant contribution to operational police work and their greater capacity to support crime control activities of the organisation, research has shown that tensions exist between special constables and regular police officers (Gill and Mawby, ibid, Gaston and Alexander, 2001). Only 15% of regular police were positive in their outlook towards reserves and 50% were indifferent – perhaps because Specials, like PCSOs, present a threat to their position. However, significantly, Gill and Mawby (1990) show a positive correlation between acceptance of reserves and the amount of contact between the two groups. As Specials gain more on-the-job experience, they not only learn the rules of policing, but become acquainted with the sub-culture and begin to endorse its defining characteristics and are more likely to be accepted by their more experienced peers. There is room therefore for optimism with regards to the integration of PCSOs into the organisation with cumulative experience. That said, it is equally possible that special constables are more likely to be welcomed and assimilated into the shared culture of regular police officers due to their possession of full police powers and their capacity to engage in a greater variation of police tasks to which PCSOs are excluded.

Organisational Variation

In seeking to explore potential variations within occupational culture it is imperative to consider variation within the organisational culture itself. Whilst occupational cultures tend to originate from front line workers, organisational cultures are typically defined from the top-down (Schein, 1992). Although placing sole emphasis on a dominant organisational culture suffers the same drawbacks as claims of a universal occupational culture

(Paoline, 2003) it is difficult to deny the powerful influence of department history and philosophy upon attitudes and values of police officers. As demonstrated in Chapter 1, traditional models of policing espoused by the police organisation have often hindered the successful implementation of community oriented policing.

James Q Wilson's (1968) classic study was the first to examine the influence of organizational culture on officer style, identifying that the chief police administrator shapes the policing style of a department depending upon the changing composition and demands of local communities, public opinions, politics and policy. Wilson's study (1968), conducted in the United States over a four year period between 1964 and 1968, draws upon detailed analysis of officer behaviour and political culture within eight police departments within the states of New York, California and Illinois. Whilst Wilson acknowledges the exploratory nature of his study and rejects notions of representativeness, efforts to increase the reliability of his findings were made involving repeated visits to twenty-five police departments prior to sample selection. In order to verify findings, local informants within each area were asked to check the validity of findings and interpretations.

Drawing upon findings from individual interviews, systematic observation of working practices and documentary analysis of departmental records, Wilson identified three styles of organisational culture; the 'watchman', the 'legalistic' and the 'service' styles of policing. Departments emphasising a 'watchman' style emphasised the importance of autonomy and order maintenance. Operating within the context of great political interference, Wilson noted that not only did officers have great discretion in managing their beats, but 'watchman' departments tended to have token planning, research and community relations departments and with a high proportion of officers driven by their love of action and representative of Reiner's (1978) 'Uniform Carrier'. Lundman (1980) asserts that avoidance is a defining characteristic of the watchman style; officers have a value system promoting least resistance, the avoidance of trouble and summary justice. The second 'legalistic' style conversely operates under a law enforcement approach whereby the notion of police community relations is widely

conceived. The style of organisation supporting this style of policing tended to be bureaucratic and professionalised, undoubtedly emphasised by technological development, professionalization and the widespread adoption of managerialism. Officers had a tendency to play by the book, but organisations adopting this style can also produce Reiner's 'Bobby', 'New Centurion' and 'Professionals'. The third 'service' style, found within homogenous middle class communities, is characterised by community-oriented style of policing, emphasising consensual, service functions of the police. Police intervention, although frequent as a result of the service emphasis, is rarely formal or enforcement led. We can immediately recognise the dominance of the legalistic style and the rejection of the watchman style within modern policing.

Department styles do not necessarily inform police behaviour but are subject to the social context in which they arise and the capacity of senior managers to embed philosophies into working rules. With regards to social context, Reiner argues that the introduction of styles can 'run into paradoxical difficulties if introduced in an adverse social context' (2000, 104). For example, a legalistic style might become aggressive due to restricted levels of discretion. It is also important to consider Wilson's research in light of social and political change (Hassell et al, 2003). The policing environment at the time of Wilson's study is unrecognisable today particularly in light of increasing and competing demands on police time and the loss of monopoly of the public police for crime control. Additionally, the increasing need for central and local accountability (McLaughlin, 2007), and public pressure for the police to adopt a more sensitive, customer service style policing will have had input in shaping organisational cultures, perhaps leading to greater fluidity between one style to another. With regards to the translation of police styles into practice, Kiely and Peek (2002) in their study of police culture within the South West of England, demonstrates that insufficient skill and attention was paid to communicating the importance of implementing a community oriented model leading to greater attention being placed upon risk management and performance.

One of the key assertions made by Wilson was the central importance of the local political culture in determining which style is adopted by a department. According to Hassell et al, (2003)

> "Police work is carried out under the influence of political culture, though not necessarily under day-to-day political direction. By political culture is meant those widely shared expectations as to how issues will be raised, governmental objectives determined, and power for their attainment assembled; it is an understanding of what makes a government legitimate".

Whilst Wilson's study provides a useful analogy of the differing organisational cultures and has become an influential theory of police behaviour, questions must be raised regarding its validity as a theory of contemporary political culture and structural organisation of police departments. In response to a perceived lack of assessment of Wilson's theory, (Skolnick and Bayley, 1986, Crank, 1994), Hassell et al, (2003; 244) tested the relationship between organisational style and political culture, concluding "local political culture, as empirically defined by Wilson (1968), no longer influences organizational arrangements in large, municipal police departments" suggesting the reduced influence of local politics, the effects of partisan influence, and increasing standardisation and centralisation as explanation.

More recently, Loftus (2008) has examined the impact of efforts to increase diversity within the organisation upon the interior police culture and informal ideologies of front line officers. Building upon an ethnographic study conducted within an English force, Loftus clearly identifies how the political culture and current emphasis upon diversification has led to two distinct perspectives of the working environment. The first posits a degree of resentment towards the institutionalisation of diversity, held principally by white, heterosexual, male officers. In contrast, the second, held by female, minority ethnic and gay officers "reveals the persistence of an imperious white, heterosexist, male culture". Clearly there exists a very real tension between the goals of the political culture and internal responses to such aims, perpetuated by the dominant culture to subjugate those who do not

represent those same values and beliefs. As articulated by Loftus (2008, 774),

> "It seems clear from the narratives presented here that the extension of recognition for hitherto marginalised groups sits uneasily within the culture of the ordinary rank and file".

Variation in cultural attitudes has also been found across police rank and associated activities. Whilst research relating to the rank and file culture of police officers remains important due to its potential damaging effects on standards of police work (Holdaway, 1989), other research, such as that by Reuss-Ianni (1983), suggests that there has been weakening of the street cop culture among police due to social and political forces to the extent that there is no longer, (if there ever was) an all pervading monolithic police culture. Reuss-Ianni (ibid) cites the growth of competition among agencies for scarce resources, an increasingly management oriented political leadership with its emphasis on accountability and productivity, and increasing diversity within police personnel as potential influences upon the subsidence of the traditional culture. Based on a two year study conducted in a New York police department, Reuss-Ianni identifies two distinct cultures of policing; the street cop culture and the management cop culture. Both cultures co-exist with one another but are characterised by competing and often conflicting perspectives on procedure and practice.

The street cop culture embraces the policing of 'the good old days' when police were respected and valued by the public, when officers could be counted on and the 'bosses' were an integral part of the police family treating officers as professionals "who knew their job and how best to get it done" with little interference from outside the department, (ibid, 1). It is however debateable whether police organisations were so harmonious during the perceived 'good old days' or whether this is due to nostalgia (Punch, 1983). Solidarity is however consolidated through this shared nostalgia that it evokes a strong sense of teamwork and loyalty amongst officers to the extent that it appears 'clannish' (Reuss-Ianni, 1983, Skolnick, 1966). As a result of social and political forces outlined above, Reuss-Ianni argues a new headquarters management cop culture has emerged that is bureaucratically

opposed to the street cop ethos of policing. Although both cultures share the objective of crime reduction, “the new management cop culture is positively oriented towards public administration and looks to scientific management and its associated technologies for guidance on how to run the department”, (ibid, 2). Reuss-Ianni notes that the incongruent value systems and differing expectations are major factors in the isolation of the street cop due to inconsistencies in the jobs they are expected to do, the resources they have to conduct their work and resulting compromises they are forced to make with themselves and the public. The conflict in value systems therefore meant that the department was no longer a “cohesive organizational home for the commonly shared ethos that we call street cop culture”, (ibid, 5). This distancing of relationships between the lower ranks and management has also been articulated by Punch, (1983, 337) who argues “secrecy and solidarity characterise the occupational culture not only in relation to the outside world, but also with regard to internal relationships”.

A more recent study by Manning, (1994, in Chan, 1997) also conducted in the United States provides support for Reuss-Ianni’s claims. Manning further differentiates between three classes of culture: lower participants, referring to patrol and street sergeants, middle managers, referring to intermediary levels of management, and top command, to refer to superintendents and chief officers. The culture insulates officers based on the unique concerns and issues relevant to each rank, as each level has different concerns, orientations, values and norms that dominate each culture. As lower participants focus upon the immediate demands of the job, those middle managers act as a ‘buffer’ between the lower and upper levels and the upper level are concerned with the politics of internal management and being accountable to external audiences. Farkas and Manning (1997) suggest that these differentiations in culture may actually reflect the service’s physical position, what they define as being either structurally bounded or as an open field, and the current status of the occupation.

Contributions made by Reuss-Ianni (1983), Punch (1983) and Farkas and Manning (1997) are therefore central in debates not only in relation to variance within the police occupational culture, but also of the potential for

fluidity of cultural attitudes, orientations and allegiances of officers throughout their career as a police officer. As indicated by Paoline, (2003, 206),

> "One could reasonably hypothesise that as officers advance in rank, commitment to the occupational culture that served to manage the strains found at the entry level of policing wanes, as different cultural commitments emerge, based primarily on changes in one's work environments".

Such findings therefore raise the possibility for certain cultural characteristics to be either rejected or maintained by individual officers as they advance through the ranks or choose to specialise in particular policing functions and/or tasks. Similarly, it is also relevant to ask whether allocation of officers to specific areas for deployment, each with their own local policies and practices based on specific area demands, can result in further variation in culture.

The strength and resilience of the police culture has further been challenged by Foster (1989) in her ethnographic study of two inner city police stations within London; Gorer Lane and Stanton. Each area shared similar problems of urban decay, high crime rates and high density of local authority housing, but front-line officers working in each area had very different attitudes, styles and approaches to their work. Defining the area in which they worked as 'the pits', Gorer Lane officers, who were mainly young and with between two to five years experience, perceived crime as a 'way of life' for the majority of residents and were therefore extremely suspicious of the public. Due to their perceived hostility and rejection from the public, officers from Gorer Lane were deemed to part of an 'exclusive club' whereby officers from outside the station were made to feel unwelcome. Stanton officers, in stark contrast, held more experienced officers who were more community-oriented and experimental. As a result of the Brixton Riots within London some five years prior to the study, officers had adopted a more sensitive approach that emphasised both crime and community issues and community involvement leading to her conclusion that "the environment where officers work after their training and quality of their management have an important part to play in their behaviour", (ibid, 1989, 149). Whilst Foster acknowledges

sub-cultural similarities with the traditional culture amongst some officers, Foster states that Stanton officers, “came to see that policing was more than dashing around in fast cars, even if many still had the urge to do that kind of policing”, suggesting that these cultural characteristics related to notions of ‘proper’ police work could be managed.

In support, Mastrofski, Worden and Snipes (1995) suggest that increasing impetus for the police to engage in community policing approaches to improve public relations and police legitimacy is more likely to lead to expansion of the police role beyond law enforcement or crime fighting. Similarly, Paoline, (2003) contends that the shift towards more customer focused policing will affect the occupational strains between police and citizens as well as strains between police and their supervision. However, suspicion and a ‘us versus them’ attitude will be difficult to break due to fact that officers spend a disproportionate period of their time tackling those non-law abiding sections of the community, and as demonstrated in discussions surrounding the implementation of community policing in the previous chapter, officers are typically detracted from community oriented work towards more reactive policing responsibilities which may undermine progress in building community relations.

The Rejection of Culture: Towards Appreciative Subcultural Accounts

More recently studies have sought a more explanatory theory of police culture. Cochran and Bromley (2003) are critical of past research on police sub-culture shared by rank and file officers for being overly exploratory and descriptive, rather than explanatory, and their automatic acceptance of the culture and its omnipresent nature. Utilising a questionnaire design in order to allow for statistical and cluster analysis, Cochran and Bromley’s study suggests that the traditional police culture was only present within a small segment of police ranks. Instead, they identify evidence of a stronger “nouveau police culture” held by 30% of officers that is strongly oriented toward community service”, (ibid, 108). Support for the dissipation of the

police culture can also been observed in studies by Herbert (1998) and Worden (1995). Herbert, like Cochran and Bromley (2003), suggests that previous studies are insufficient to explain the presence and domination of a police culture, instead suggesting that the police culture is a myth. Previous cultural research is criticised due to placing too sharp a distinction between the formal and informal – between the "legal and bureaucratic regulations that ostensibly dictate police behaviours and the less formal ethos of the subculture", (Herbert, 1998, 344) and due to typological research being too restrictive to capture shifts in officers' orientations. Instead, Herbert suggests six normative orders, distinct from other occupational groups, which structure the world of the police, providing different sets of rules and practices used by officers as a resource to define situations and determine their response. Herbert argues there may be conflict between orders and orders can become contradictory potentially leading to interorganisational conflict depending on the exigencies of the situation in which the officer finds him/herself. The use of normative orders highlights the strength of the individual as an influential factor in interpreting the relevance of cultural principles. Herbert, in some respects, not only shows that precedence afforded to traditional police culture may be overstated, but that there is interplay between the individual, normative orders used for action and the organisation by seeking to provide a link between internal and external views of culture.

Whilst traditional cultural attitudes still prevail studies such as Foster (1989) and Herbert (1998) have suggested there are ways of changing the negative elements of the traditional police culture. Paoline (2001, 2003, 2004) suggests that whilst personal characteristics and departmental styles are important in shaping culture, it is also relevant to consider concerted efforts to diversify and educate the police, and the potential of the individual experiences of deployment, such as specific areas of working and officer shifts. Despite Loftus' (2008) conclusions, the selection and recruitment of officers has and continues to be influenced by the need for police to be representative of the communities they serve. Holdaway (1996) similarly suggests that styles of policing can be modified when large numbers of black officers patrol in discrete areas. Whilst issues of gender equality and

discrimination are still an issue of debate (Silvestri, 2003) and it is inaccurate to suggest they currently enjoy full integration (Brown, 1998), the proportion of women entering and progressing both horizontally and vertically within the police organisation is increasing.

Woodcock (1991), Brown (1992), and Chan (1997) have similarly spoken about the potential for change and reform within police culture, albeit from different perspectives. Sir John Woodcock (1991), the HMIC's chief officer at the time of writing, emphasises the imperative need for greater openness, quality of service based upon publicly defined needs, and greater tolerance and flexibility to move away from the traditional police culture. Brown, (1992) however expresses concerns about the potential for sustained change due to the resilience of the prevailing culture within the socialisation process. Whilst improvements have and are continuing to be made to encourage recruitment of ethnic minorities and graduates, Brown (1992) argues that 'there are indications that the presence of these groups has yet to reach critical mass to have an appreciable impact on the grass roots cultural milieu of the police".

Approaching the notion of change from an alternative angle, Chan (1997) identifies the difficulty in securing change through externally imposed changes. Drawing upon her research conducted within New South Wales, Australia, Chan argues that strategies for meaningful change need to use the 'right incentives' to continually challenge old assumptions through a combination of related changes including law reform, external and internal monitoring, reward and accountability structures. In essence, reform of the structural elements (social, economic, legal and political environment in which policing takes place) identified as the field of policing, as well as the cultural arenas of policing, (classifications, notions of knowledge, accepted practice within the 'craft' of policing) identified as the habitus, is needed to secure sustainable change, (Chan, 1996). Theories of police culture need therefore to acknowledge multiple cultures within and across police forces.

Contemporary research is thus beginning to tap into explaining how officers individually cope with their occupational world, (Chan, 1996) and how officers differ and come together and in their adaptations to contemporary police challenges and demands. In reaction to the condemnatory approach to culture traditionally espoused by past research and research evidence of a 'disappearing sub-culture' of the rank and file (Foster, 1989, Herbert, 1998, Chan, 1996), Waddington (1999b) seeks to provide a more 'appreciative' conception of culture. Waddington justifies his re-orientation with reference to the increasing heterogenous composition of police forces and specialisation of tasks, hierarchical divisions within the force, divergent police philosophies and the role of the individual in adopting or rejecting aspects of the culture that they find personally acceptable. Indeed, the latter is also asserted by Reiner (1992, 109) in the sentiment that 'officers are not passive or manipulated learners' as they progress through socialisation into the organisation. Where previous authors have stressed the importance of 'rule tightening' (Brogden, Jefferson and Walklate, 1988) or changing the informal culture in order to affect working rules (Reiner, 1992, 2000), Chan (1997, 92) argues that "culture should not be understood as internalised rules or values independent of the conditions of policing", but should appreciate the social, legal and organisational contexts whereby individuals play an active role in the creation of culture and the interpretation and management of their working environment.

The growing shift within research towards a more appreciative understanding of the culture is concerned with the capacity for change within internal cultures and the influence of organisational wider societal factors to shape police culture and behaviour. However, as Foster (2003) rightly identifies, transformational change can only occur if police leaders and officers across all levels of the police hierarchy support the positive, possibilities for change in a directed focused way. With reference to appreciative inquiry research by Liebling and Price (2001) with prison officers, Foster (2003) identifies a need for police research to positively explore officer experiences and how they perceive the organisation can move forward.

The recent civilianisation of patrol, as documented by Johnston, (2005), brings with it the potential for the further dissipation of the traditional police culture and the potential emergence for alternative police subcultures. Within the context of increasing diversity of police forces and increasing civilianisation of police tasks, this study seeks to examine the emergence of a PCSO culture within the police organisation. In the absence of a stock of experience or cultural heritage in relation to 'what makes a good officer', PCSOs are more dependent on experiential knowledge to construct their cultural knowledge and to inform action and decision making. Without a remit for crime fighting, they have the potential to secure a lower status within the police hierarchy and to be excluded by the dominant culture (Mastrofski, 1995, Loftus, 2008). As a new form of public policing, exploring the progress and challenges faced in entering and becoming established within the police organisation is an important aspect in understanding how PCSOs construct their identities, attitudes and values in relation to their police officer colleagues. The precise nature of the PCSO role, their remit for reassurance and service aspects of the police role and the level of contact with local communities are likely to construct a distinct occupational environment from that experienced by fully sworn police officers. This study seeks to explore whether PCSOs develop alternative coping mechanisms and cultural characteristics as shared by police officers in response to these features of their environment and their unique position within the police organisation.

Chapter 4 - Methodology

Introduction

This chapter is concerned with outlining the research process and methodologies utilised to develop an understanding of PCSO practices and culture within the wider context of the police organisation. The chapter includes the rationale for the research, the adoption of an appreciative epistemological perspective, sampling and an outline of case study areas, data collection techniques and analysis, and research difficulties and ethical concerns in conducting an ethnographic study on the police.

Research Questions and Approach

The aim of this research is to critically examine the existence and characteristics of a PCSO occupational culture and its influence upon the delivery of neighbourhood policing within a Northern police force. This research is unique for three reasons;

- First, PCSO research to date has been impact oriented (Cooper et al, 2006, Chatterton and Rowland 2005, Crawford et al, 2004) or concerned with their capacity to improve equality and diversity within police forces (Johnston, 2006) shedding little light on their working practices, skills or their capacity to deliver reassurance.
- Second, with the exception the work of Micucci (1998) and Singh and Kempa (2007) concerning private policing cultures, studies of police (sub)culture have been disproportionately concerned with fully sworn police officers (Reiner, 2000, Foster 2006). This study therefore provides a valuable opportunity to develop an analysis of a subculture within the police organisation that has not previously been studied and therefore provide an original contribution to existing theoretical knowledge and understanding of police (sub) cultures.

- Third, counter to the critical standpoint adopted within previous studies of police culture (Holdaway 1977, Punch 1979, Young 1991), this study is underpinned by an appreciative perspective, and supported by a holistic methodological approach involving observation and ethnographic interviewing in capturing PCSO experience, practice and culture.

In consideration of the above, the research objectives for the study are to:

- Develop knowledge and understanding of a PCSO culture – their experiences, working practices and attached meanings, occupational identity, and sense of legitimacy and support.
- Critically explore the influence of organisational factors upon PCSO working practices and occupational identity
- Examine relationships between PCSOs and fully sworn police officers and in so doing explore the drivers and inhibitors to integration and effective practice
- Develop a theoretically robust understanding of PCSO culture and operation.

The third objective above was amended slightly over the course of the research. An original intention was to explore PCSO relationships with key stakeholders outside the organisation including local authority personnel engaged in community safety and community engagement, and other members of the extended police family, such as neighbourhood wardens. However, engagement with such individuals was not a structured component of PCSO working practices or within the delivery of reassurance policing. Instead, contact between PCSOs and wardens tended to occur on an ad hoc basis when PCSOs required their support for the purposes of intelligence gathering and contact with local authority personnel, with the exception of sporadic contact with education welfare and truancy officers, tended to fall within the remit of neighbourhood police officers rather than PCSOs.

Ethnography is particularly suited to the study of police culture and has a long history within police cultural research due to its capacity for richness of data and to uncover the complexities of police work. From pioneering studies from the likes of Banton (1964) and Westley (1970) to studies documenting the traditional police culture as conducted by Holdaway (1983), Punch (1979) and Smith and Grey (1983), ethnographic studies of police work have sought to understand the routine activities involved in police work, influences upon police decision-making, and their interaction with the public. Van Maanen (1995; 4) defines ethnography as "the study of a culture or cultures that a group of people share". Ethnography is typically described as a 'naturalistic' approach to studying human behaviour and culture, committed to observing subjects within their natural setting. Although starting from an insider position, conducting his research covertly whilst serving as a police officer, Young (1991; 15) argues that the ethnographic or anthropological method is suited to a study of police culture "for it requires an extended field of study to reveal much about the unspoken agenda which determines many aspects of police practice".

Whilst it is difficult to refute Reiner and Newburn's (2008; 355) observation that "ultimately there is no way of knowing whether what police do in front of observers or what they say to interviewers is intended to present an acceptable face to outsiders", ethnographic approaches and its association with participant observation enables the researcher to secure sustained levels of contact and to develop more familiar relations with the researched increasing the ability of the researcher to penetrate the low visibility of police work (Noaks and Wincup, 2004) and to contextualise police action and decision making within the situational environment under which they occur. Furthermore, the use of observation under an ethnographic approach is able to distinguish between police talk and police action. As Waddington (1999; 302) urges in his analysis of police culture, "if we wish to explain (and not just condemn) police behaviour on the streets, then we should look not in the remote recesses of what they say in the canteen or privately to researchers, but in the circumstances in which they act". Support for the applicability of the ethnographic approach to the aims of this study is

provided by Denscombe, (1998; 79) who argues, “ethnographic research is well suited to dealing with the way members of a culture see events – as seen through their eyes”. This commitment to the subjective interpretations of social reality of the observed (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983) and Robinson and Reed’s (1998) observation that ethnography is typically adopted when little is known about a subgroup and as a means of developing an understanding of the views, values and beliefs of that group, therefore suggests an ethnographic approach is more compatible with the aims and objectives of this study than other methodological approaches that emphasise objectivity and value neutrality.

Previous sociological studies of policing and police culture, largely undertaken during periods of social upheaval, the increasing politicisation of policing (Reiner 2000b, McLaughlin 2007) and publicised accounts of corruption and abuse of police power, were primarily motivated by critical perspectives of police work (Holdaway, 1989). Whilst the vast majority of police cultural studies did not set out to be critical, studies emerging within such a context, tended to concentrate on the negative characteristics of police officers and their attitudes towards the public and their work (Punch, 1979, Holdaway, 1979, Brogden, 1982, Young 1991, Reiner, 2000a). Despite efforts from some researchers to appreciate the challenges and pressures faced by police in delivering crime control (Reiner, 1994, 2000b) or to understand aspects of police culture as coping mechanisms to the danger and uncertainty inherent within police work (Skolnick 1966, Paoline 2002), critical approaches to policing have not disappeared (Sanders and Young, 2003, Sharp, 2005). This is hardly surprising given that the very nature of police work is dangerous and characterised by conflict and control (Bittner, 1974). However, there is a growing body of work that challenges traditional representations of police culture derived from such a critical approach.

As identified in the previous chapter, the works of Chan (1997), Fielding (1989), Foster (1989, 2003), and Waddington (1999) have sought to present appreciative sociological approaches to culture, illuminating the existence of multiple police subcultures within the police organisation influenced by hierarchy, occupational status and duties, and group norms

and values. These authors argue that presenting police culture as a unifying, one-dimensional entity, as presented by traditional, more critical studies is misleading and provides an imbalanced account of the existence and expression of police culture (Foster, 2003). Instead, emphasis is placed on positioning the individual police officer at the centre of analysis to explore more fully their active role in adopting or rejecting aspects of the culture that they find personally acceptable (Fielding, 1989, Waddington, 1999), since ultimately police make sense of their work better than most researchers (Chan 2006). In respecting diversity and the role of the individual, these studies collectively identify the significance of adopting a more positive approach to understanding police culture and how things work within the context of organisational change and policing reform. As argued by Fleming and Wood (2007) it is important that officer's direct work experiences and the organisational factors that shape those experiences are not ignored. Therefore whilst it is inaccurate to suggest that appreciative accounts offer a 'truer' picture than more critical accounts, they place the researched at the centre of analysis in order to understand the contextual, structural and political reality in which such accounts are gained (Liebling and Price 2001). Given that PCSOs represent a major shift in the civilianisation of police work such an approach seems particularly pertinent to this study if the nature of PCSO practices, decision making and experiences within the context of the modernisation and reform are to be understood. Adopting a critical approach is unlikely to provide the depth of data required to discover the complexities and defining characteristics of a PCSO (sub)culture, their unique experiences of police work or the organisational and political context in which they work.

One such effort to provide a more appreciative approach to organisational change within the criminal justice system is Liebling and Price's (2001) study of prison officers. Adopting an approach called appreciative enquiry (Elliot 1999), Liebling and Price (2001) argue that whilst traditional social science research focuses on problems and difficulties, appreciative inquiry tries to allow good practice, best experiences and accomplishments to emerge through supporting and developing rather than

criticising and condemning staff (ibid, 163). Appreciative inquiry might accentuate the positive, but in doing so, it has the potential to confront the negative by developing a richer understanding of the circumstances in which negative experiences occur (Braithwaite 1999, Liebling and Price, 2001, Liebling et al, 2001).

Adopting an appreciative approach should not therefore be understood as a concentration upon the positive to the exclusion of the negative. This piece of research was driven by the notion that appreciative inquiry can offer some significant pathways towards criminological 'verstehen' or understanding (Liebling et al, 1999). That is, only by placing the research participant at centre stage, by developing rapport and trust, and by using generative questions to encourage participants to explore, illustrate and reflect upon their experiences and views could sufficient understanding of the challenges and difficulties experienced by PCSOs, both within local communities and as new members of the organisation, be understood. The challenge for the researcher is to encourage participants to "tell the whole story" (Liebling et al, 2001, 162) and to reveal "survivals and achievements as well as pains and deprivations" to provide a more balanced picture of PCSO practice and experience. Whilst such an approach has yet to be adopted in police research, Foster (2003; 222) suggests that appreciative inquiry might offer new insight and possibilities for understanding the complexities of police cultures. Identifying what is 'working' in PCSO practice and uncovering the meanings and value PCSOs attach to their work is more likely to provide a richer understanding of their lived realities and their experiences of delivering reassurance than critical approaches.

Certainly, being appreciative did not render the negative insignificant. As rapport developed between the researcher and participants, PCSOs became increasingly candid in revealing instances of easing behaviour (Cain, 1973), incidents of rule breaking and even misconduct by other officers. Such revelations were given in confidence and on the condition that such accounts were not repeated and did not feature within research findings. My commitment to appreciation prevented rejecting such requests by participants since failing to do so would not only sacrifice rapport but would

threaten the completion of the research. However, this did not mean that such data was disregarded during subsequent data analysis or in the construction of theoretical conclusions. Such statements revealed much about orientations to the role and police work held by individuals involved and those PCSOs revealing such details. It became clear that PCSOs who engaged in easing behaviour did so either in response to frustrations with the role and their limited capacity to engage in crime control activities, or as a consequence of becoming disillusioned with the role and its purpose. Indeed, in recounting negative behaviours and explained such rule deviation and misconduct as resulting from the lack of authority and variation within role. Rather than being excluded or ignored from analysis, such negative behaviours and attitudes were placed in the context in which they occurred, and supported a more balanced understanding of PCSO adaptations to the role and their engagement with the dominant culture.

Despite the explanatory power of the negative, there is a danger within appreciative accounts of accentuating the positive and sidelining the negative. There is some basis therefore to argue that appreciative accounts also suffer from a similar bias as more critical accounts. In order to develop an in-depth, robust understanding of the nuances of police culture, it was necessary to place PCSOs at the centre of the research and emphasise the individual meanings that they attach to their work. A degree of emotional attachment and involvement on the part of the researcher was therefore necessary in order to understand these meanings and achieve sufficient insight into PCSO adaptations to the challenges within the role. A certain degree of bias can therefore be seen as an inevitable, and perhaps unavoidable, aspect in all ethnographic research.

Nonetheless, the adoption of an appreciative approach can have significant benefits with regards to the development of trust and rapport between research participants and the researcher. Liebling and Price (2001; 10) identified that prison officers responded unconditionally to positive regard and were more likely to be generous in communicating and providing information and perceptions to ‘uncritical observers of their work’. Although drawing upon experiences of using appreciative inquiry within business,

Busche (1995) similarly suggests that people “love to be interviewed appreciatively” and using an appreciative lens to understand organisational change provides rich stories and insight about the meanings people attach to their work. Adopting a more appreciative approach may therefore not only provide valuable data and insight but it may also assist in achieving social access and building trust amongst PCSOs and police officers involved in the study thereby enhancing the validity of the study.

- It is unlikely that the same richness of data about this new civilian force within public policing would have been secured had a more critical perspective been adopted for four reasons. First and foremost, it is unlikely that access would have even been granted by the organisation without a commitment to appreciation. Secondly, without showing sufficient commitment to individual perspectives, it would have been considerably more difficult to achieve social access and gain insight into what it meant to be a PCSO and how to ‘survive’ as a PCSO in communities of conflict and within the organisation. Thirdly, if I took a more critical perspective and accepted an understanding of culture as a unifying, universal concept and focused upon negative aspects of culture, I would have sacrificed depth of knowledge and understanding. Without taking an appreciative account I would not have been able to understand the wider organisational and structural context or the reasons why the negative occurred but would be reliant upon my own interpretations. And fourthly, the adoption of a more critical perspective would have prevented an understanding of the significance of individual aspirations and orientations to the role in determining which aspects of the culture were accepted or rejected by individual PCSOs, the purposive role that the dominant culture plays for some PCSOs or of the differing ways in which PCSOs construct their identity within the organisation.

An appreciative approach to understanding PCSO experiences and the meanings PCSOs attach to their work requires an ethnographic approach that immerses the researcher into the social world of those under study (Liebling, 2001). The difficulties in operationalising an appreciative approach within the police organisation given their reported hostility to research or

status must however be acknowledged. Indeed, Fielding (1990; 609) in reflecting upon the notion of taking an 'appreciative stance' to studying the police organisation argues that the notion of developing rapport and empathy with cultural members within previous ethnographic research is

> "based on studies of groups which researchers found conducive, whimsical, or at least non-threatening. Less discussed are the problems in applying those methods to 'unloved' groups and those hostile to research".

As such, achieving a balance between passivity and scepticism, as endorsed by Fielding's (1990) 'intercalary role' in his research on police competence, is therefore important to avoid partiality. Emphasis in this study was subsequently placed on appreciating the separate assumptions held by PCSOs, developing analytic appreciation of the individual PCSOs in the wider context of reassurance policing rather than the context of reassurance policing through the individual PCSO, and applying sensitivity during interactions with PCSOs in order to present PCSOs as co-producers (Lee and Renzetti, 1990, 524), or interpretive actors (Sharrock and Anderson, 1980 in Fielding, 1990) in the research process whereby the researcher and researched collaboratively makes sense of their actions.

Whilst not a central aim of the research, the adoption of an appreciative perspective also afforded benefits in relation to developing an understanding of the limitations of the PCSO role and the subsequent implications for policing. In order to achieve insight into the impact of PCSOs upon policing, it was necessary for the research to be framed within neighbourhood policing teams operating within a discrete geographical context. The way in which the research was constructed therefore lent itself to developing an understanding of implications posed by the role. Placing PCSO perspectives at the centre of analysis meant that they were able to explain the challenges of delivering reassurance in communities of conflict, articulate the impact of role limitations upon meeting public expectations and in maintaining order, and articulate their relationships with fully sworn colleagues. Observing PCSOs practices, decision making, and engagement

with the public alongside reflections made by PCSOs about their work produced an understanding of the supporting role PCSOs provide to the police and the scope for development within the role, for example, the potential for PCSOs to enhance police legitimacy via procedural based policing and a commitment to community building and engagement with young people.

Methodology and Methods

In pursuit of an ethnographic understanding of PCSO culture, this study utilises methodological approaches that sit most comfortably within the qualitative research tradition. Qualitative research methodologies are particularly suited to the aims and objectives of this study. Qualitative methodologies aim to achieve a holistic understanding of participants' attitudes, opinions and behaviour and locate these within their lived experiences. Researchers subsequently place emphasis upon experiential and interpretive knowledge and accordingly on the role of the researcher in interpreting these experiences rather than placing emphasis upon objectivity or causation as documented using statistical concepts. Experiential and interpretive knowledge is achieved through in-depth studies of a specific population allowing the researcher to ascertain a picture or interpretation of reality 'from the inside' (Hammersley 1992). Strauss and Corbin (1990; 17) argue that not only can qualitative research refer to research about persons' lives, stories or behaviour but can help shed light on organisational functioning and interactional relationships, further demonstrating its suitability to the aims of this study. Despite criticisms that have been levelled at qualitative methodologies such as their time consuming nature and the lack of generalisability of findings generated through intensive study of relatively small populations (Miles and Huberman, 1994), they are useful in providing detailed description and insights into specific populations (Silverman, 1993) that cannot be achieved by quantitative methodologies.

Contemporary ethnographic practice is characterised by extended participation within the field and a flexible qualitative research strategy

employing a wide variation of methods in order to produce different levels of data. Data triangulation is essential within ethnography as a means of validation of findings requiring the researcher to collect data “from all sources and in all ways as best fits the purpose” (Brewer, 2000; 76). Triangulation also serves to clarify meaning by identifying different ways the phenomenon is being seen, (Denzin, 2003, Silverman, 1993). This research is no exception. Developing an in-depth understanding of the ways in which PCSO attitudes, experiences, working practices and identities combine within the context of the wider police organisational structure also requires methodological triangulation (Denzin, 1998) if the different levels of knowledge within, and the influences that bear upon, that culture are to be obtained. Conducted within a wider commitment to the principles of ethnographic research, this study employs participant observation, qualitative interviews and focus groups as its primary methods of investigation within the context of a case study approach.

Case Study

A case study approach is the most appropriate means of determining the population to be studied for the following reasons. First, all ethnographic research involves case study as the focus of analysis due to their manageability and their capacity to deal with the subtleties of complex social situations (Descombe, 1998). Collecting ‘rich’, detailed and ‘deep’ data is time consuming and demanding to the extent that ethnographers are rarely able to devote their attention to more than one or two fields within any given study (Brewer, 2000). Second, the realities of, and influences upon, the development of PCSO culture cannot be captured through an approach that prioritises breadth of data over depth of data since relationships and processes involved in shaping culture are complex and context specific that require reflective consideration. And third, understanding the complexities of the subject of a PCSO culture has not yet been the subject of previous study. It is important that this study is able to focus upon key processes and themes that influence the establishment and development of a PCSO culture. Whilst

being concentrated within the study area, such depth of knowledge can only be gained via a case study approach.

Yin, (2003; 5) distinguishes between different types of case studies in social research; exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. These three case study strategies have distinctive characteristics; exploratory case studies broadly seek to generate questions for a subsequent study, descriptive case studies aim to describe and develop understanding of a phenomenon, whilst explanatory case studies are concerned with identifying cause-effect relationships and explaining how particular events occurred. Whilst this study will for the most part be symptomatic of a descriptive study, due to a lack of prior research of the subject, it is important to acknowledge that although each strategy has defining characteristics, the boundaries between them are not conspicuous, and that large overlaps do exist. Concerned with exploring, investigating, and developing an understanding, and conceivably an explanation of PCSO culture, this study will incorporate a number of characteristics associated with all three types of case study strategy to varying degrees.

Case studies can also be single or multiple case designs. A single case study might provide a greater amount of detail than would the use of multiple case studies, but without the advantages that accrue with focusing upon two areas. This study utilises a multiple case study design using two distinct, though not dissimilar, case areas (Stake, 1994) to provide greater insight into the organisational, interpersonal and situational influences upon PCSO working practices. This study does not seek to make causal statements or identify the generalisability of a PCSO culture to other contexts since the purpose of a case study is not to “represent the world, but to represent the case” (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994). Locating the study within two parallel ethnographic cases however not only provides greater opportunity to learn about the phenomena under study (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003) but can offer greater robustness and validity to theoretical conclusions made than can single cases, (Ragin, 1987, Yin, 2003) since extended observation, reflection and exploration of meaning can occur in both cases. It is therefore anticipated that rather than making empirical generalisations

(Aull-Davies, 1999) the research can make some broad theoretical observations concerning the experiences of PCSOs, the meanings they attach to their work and the drivers and inhibitors to their integration into the police organisation.

The selection of cases was supported by an already established working relationship with senior officers within the police force involved in this study stemming from the involvement of the researcher in an evaluative study of the implementation of PCSOs between 2004 and 2006. The evaluation had been positively received by the force concerned and senior officers were eager to learn more about the working practices and integration of PCSOs within neighbourhood police teams. Senior officers responsible for PCSO areas of deployment were approached with the proposed piece of research for their approval. Despite initial concerns about the researcher accompanying PCSOs on patrol, access was granted without any difficulty most likely due to having already established a positive reputation through the evaluative study (Reiner, 1992). Following initial approval of the proposed piece of research, a series of meetings were arranged to discuss the research design, sampling issues and risk assessment.

However, as explored by Brewer (2000), Punch, (1983) and Noaks (1999) in their research within police organisations, it was also necessary to adopt a range of presentational strategies as part of a 'research bargain' (Brewer 2000) to secure the support of senior officers and to ensure minimal interference in the research design. First and foremost, in order to bolster a sense of legitimacy, emphasis was placed upon the appreciative methodological position proposed in the research and its commitment to highlighting good practice and accomplishments rather than failings. As such, as demonstrated by Punch (1979b) in his study of the Warmoestraat in Amsterdam, efforts were made to dispel 'politics of distrust' (Hughes, 2000) by presenting myself as an ally rather than a critical observer. Second, access negotiations were supported by the presence of my academic supervisor who had proven trustworthy in his previous dealings with the organisation. He was able to reassure senior officers that the research would be regularly supervised and would strictly adhere to ethical guidelines from

both the host university and the British Society of Criminology. The third strategy employed in gaining initial access related to attempts to promote the potential outcomes of the research in a way that would best serve their interests, for example, its capacity to provide lessons on 'how' to deliver reassurance and community engagement and its potential to feed into the future training of PCSOs. In addition to efforts to 'sell' the research, a concerted effort was made to exclude the word 'culture' from the proposal in order to avoid the negative connotations and controversy associated with police cultural studies. Despite the use of such presentational techniques, the original objectives and intentions of the research remained unaltered and access was granted based on an accurate presentation of the research aims.

Sampling

The police force sampled within this study is one of the largest forces in the country serving a population of 1.5 million people and covering an area of 2,000 square miles. Located within the North of England, the force area is split into six geographical commands, encompassing two inner city areas, urban conurbations and rural communities. In March 2010, the force employed 4, 187 ranked officers, 2,010 police staff and 438 PCSOs (Sigurdsson and Dani, 2010), (compared to just 248 PCSOs on commencement of the study in March 2007) (Bullock and Gunning, 2007)). The HMIC performance assessment conducted in March 2010 (O'Connor, 2010) identified that the force was performing well in relation to all three key areas of policing; local crime and policing, protection from serious harm, and confidence and satisfaction. More specifically within the same report, HMIC identified 'excellent' performance by the force in relation to reducing and solving crime, suppressing gun and knife crime, and in levels of public confidence across the force area (HMIC, n.d.). Despite performing well in relation to public confidence, HMIC (ibid) identified the force as meeting the national standard in relation to neighbourhood policing and investigating major crime, but underperforming with regards to the comparative satisfaction of BME communities.

PCSOs were introduced into the force in September 2003. Forty-five PCSOs were initially implemented across three of the six geographical area commands. Supported by local authority Neighbourhood Renewal funding and the third round of Home Office PCSO funding, the force recruited an additional 42 PCSOs in 2004 and began to roll out PCSOs into the remaining three area commands (Dolman and Francis, 2006) In March 2006, there was a total of 133 PCSOs in operation across the force (ibid). PCSOs were not allocated to all six areas equally with greater numbers being allocated to areas incorporating the two city centres in the force region. At the time of their introduction to the force the appointed Chief Constable held a strong commitment to the principles and policing style of community policing.

Reflecting the approach undertaken by participating police forces within Cooper et al's (2006) national evaluation, PCSOs were designated with a total of 21 powers under provisions contained within the Police Reform Act 2002, including the power to confiscate alcohol and tobacco from young people and the power to request the name and address of a person acting in an anti-social manner, and those relating to the issue of fixed penalty notices for disorder related and environmental offences available under provisions within the 2001 Criminal Justice and Police Act. The guidance and principles of deployment issued by ACPO (2002) were closely endorsed by the Chief Constable and became firmly entrenched within force policy, which stipulated that the main purpose of the PCSO role is to 'contribute to force initiatives for the achievement of effective public reassurance, community safety and crime and disorder reduction' (Dolman and Francis, 2006). Area commands were under fairly strict instruction that PCSOs should in no circumstances be seen as a replacement for police officers, be deployed to conduct high visibility patrols for the purpose of public reassurance, engagement and crime prevention and should not engage in any activity typically falling within the remit of a sworn police officer. In relation to the latter, operational guidance also stipulated that PCSO must not conduct any mobile patrol duties, take witness statements, take crime reports or become involved in house searches.

In April 2005, the force recruited a new Chief Constable who altered the working philosophy of the force. Whilst not counterproductive to community policing principles, this change in management led to the implementation of a central policy and philosophy of 'Total Policing', characterised by a tough law and order stance on crime, disorder and incivility. Supported by the tough law and order rhetoric espoused by New Labour (Gilling, 2007) and echoing Wilson and Kelling's (1982) 'broken window theory' and associated principles of zero tolerance policing (Innes, 2003), the policy resulted in numerous 'crackdown' campaigns to aggressively tackle alcohol related disorder and violence, vandalism and criminal damage in 2005-2007 and the introduction of a non-emergency number to co-ordinate police and local authority responses to disorder, environmental hazards and anti-social behaviour in 2006. 'Total Policing' continues to be the defining ethos of the force and continues to shape the force's strategy and policing style adopted.

This change in policing style did not provoke the Chief Constable to radically alter the PCSO role and their available powers despite the opportunity to do so. However, as suggested by Wilson (1968) it is possible that changing the policing style of the force in such a direction, combined with an ever-increasing managerialism within policing (McLaughlan, 2007) may have had a profound effect on the organisational culture and working rules of sworn officers (Chan, 1997). As identified by Schafer (2001) in his analysis of implementation failure of community policing, it is feasible that the combined impact of this change in philosophy, the traditional police culture (Skolnick, 1966, Reiner, 2000) and emphasis placed upon crime reduction and performance within policing may have led to a less discretionary, 'legalistic' policing style to develop within neighbourhood policing teams. Within such an environment, where value is attached to crimefighting and 'real' police work (Reiner, 2000), the PCSO role is not only likely to be undermined but those responsible for the deployment of PCSOs are more likely to find new and more inventive ways to better support performance defined in these same terms. PCSOs, in turn, are likely to only feel valued in the organisation when contributing to such activities rather than when

engaged in reassurance or community engagement activities, thereby shaping their levels of commitment to the role and approaches to delivering reassurance.

The allocation of PCSOs across the six geographical area commands within the force area is unequal, ranging from between two and twelve PCSOs, being largely determined depending by the nature and extent of crime and disorder problems within each area. Whilst one area command might choose to locate their entire allocation of PCSOs within one sector another might choose to target PCSOs within smaller teams throughout the various sectors within the area command. PCSOs can therefore operate throughout an entire police sector or can be deployed within a small number of selected police beat areas within a sector. Once allocated to an area command, PCSOs operate within particular sectors, often being targeted to smaller, discrete beat areas. PCSO organisation and deployment also differs across the six area commands and between sectors. Whatever method of deployment is chosen, PCSO deployment itself is not static but is adaptive to changing local priorities, defined operational needs, and the compatibility of the PCSO with problems within allocated sectors.

The selection of the area command, and subsequent two case study areas within, to be included in the research was determined by four considerations. Firstly, since the study is concerned with the development of an occupational culture and an understanding of their relationships with fully sworn police officers, it was essential that the selected case study areas had a critical mass of PCSOs to enable interaction between PCSOs and variation in PCSO decision making to be observed. A second consideration related to the previous involvement of the researcher in evaluative research with PCSOs working within three of the six area commands. These three area commands were excluded on the basis that the association of the researcher with the evaluation, and hence to the organisation itself, might serve to hinder the development of trust and discourage social access. Thirdly, practical considerations were influential given the limited scope and timeframe under which to conduct the research. Following the exclusion of the three evaluated area commands, two urban area commands and one

large rural area command remained. The rural area command was deemed unsuitable due to an absence of a critical mass of PCSOs within rural communities and the time and cost constraints imposed by travelling between PCSO target areas.

The area command selected for the study was ultimately chosen for the volume of PCSOs working within its urban areas, higher levels of crime and disorder and higher levels of deprivation therein, its ethnic diversity, limited consensus in the police and ultimately its reputation for its proactive approach to neighbourhood policing and the enthusiasm of management to encourage effective PCSO practice. It was expected that such conditions would not only provide a greater variation of PCSO working practices but would create specific challenges for reassurance and community engagement. With a population of over a quarter of a million (259,500), the area command is divided into eight sectors, two of which were selected as case study areas for this study. Area A represents the entirety of one of the eight sectors. Area B represents one geographical half of a larger police sector. Neighbourhood policing within the second sector operated through two distinct neighbourhood teams comprising twelve PCSOs (6 in each area) and twenty-two neighbourhood police officers. To incorporate both teams within the research would mean either doubling the observation hours spent within PCSOs within the sector from 150 to 300 since maintaining the same number of hours but operating over a larger area would inhibit relations with individual PCSOs. Increasing the scope of the fieldwork to such a degree was deemed impractical and inimical to making future comparisons between the two sampled areas during analysis.

The two sectors identified for case study analysis were similar in nature in terms of composition, housing tenure and levels of deprivation but differed in the ways in which area commanders had chosen to deploy PCSOs. Whilst area commanders within Area A adopted a wider role definition of the PCSO role, seeking to integrate them within the wider activities of the neighbourhood policing team, Area B adopted a more restricted role definition principally concerned with visibility. The area command had aligned PCSO and NPO shift patterns as closely as possible

in order to provide operational support PCSOs. Operating on a five-day shift pattern, PCSOs alternated between day shifts (8am-5pm) and evening shifts (2pm-11pm). NPO work patterns, owing to their reactive duties were however split over three shifts to include a night shift. Therefore whilst PCSOs were supported by NPOs for the most part, there were occasions, particularly evenings, when there were no NPOs on duty. The next section provides a brief description of the two sectors selected for case study analysis and the organisation of neighbourhood policing therein.

Area A

The two local authority wards within Area A sustains a population of almost 33,000, 22% of whom are under 16 and 17% are over 65 years of age. The area has well established residential communities, successive generations of residents living within it and high levels of community involvement. However, the area also incorporates a high proportion of lone parent families, very high levels of limiting long term illness, and the two most deprived wards in the area command in relation to education and income. Similar to Area B, levels of deprivation in the area have attracted a number of regeneration initiatives to target environmental issues, housing renewal and enhancing employment prospects for residents in the area, with the most recent bringing substantial investment to the area, redesigning homes and creating new employment and training opportunities for local people. Nine primary schools and two comprehensive schools are contained within the two wards.

Both wards within Area A were significantly affected by the economic problems and unemployment that followed the decline of traditional industries in the area, particularly shipbuilding leading to disorder and decline in the area since the 1980s. Housing within the ward closest to the city centre is predominantly publicly owned by the local authority or through a housing association. The area encompasses a large housing estate built in the mid 1970s and located on the fringes of the city centre. Bordering a major shopping street, the estate was architecturally designed to resemble a

‘village within the city’; incorporated a total of 620 houses, the estate is designed around a perimeter block, divided by communal courtyards, and streets within are separated by pedestrian walkways and vehicle access points. Despite its community focused design, becoming a grade II listed building and receiving recent renovation; the area has been subject to repeated vandalism and criminal damage and like other inner-city housing areas, remains in a state of decline. The turnover of tenancies within the estate and across the ward is high and a number of shops and services on the high street have been abandoned and boarded up. The other ward incorporated within the sampled area has a mixture of council and privately owned housing, with private housing located at the north of the area towards the ward and local authority boundary. Both areas are served by good transport links into the city centre.

Neighbourhood policing priorities for the area focus upon tackling anti-social behaviour, criminal damage and car crime. At the time of writing, the area was served by a neighbourhood policing team comprising eight neighbourhood police officers (NPOs) and six PCSOs under the command of two neighbourhood sergeants and a neighbourhood inspector. Four Special Constables provide additional support to the team. Each NPO has geographical responsibility for one of three smaller, discrete geographical beat areas within the sector and pairs of PCSOs are attached to one of these areas, although resources tend to be concentrated in and surrounding the housing estate described above. Adjoining a busy City Centre, it was not unusual (during the period of research) for officers working within the sector to be abstracted from neighbourhood policing duties to provide operational support to police officers working within the city.

Area B

The 2001 Census measures the population of the area at 13,759, of which 3,011 were under 16 (22%) and 2,199 are over 65 (16%). Located west of one of two cities within the force area, Area B is ethnically diverse with vibrant Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Chinese communities and a

growing voluntary sector and community infrastructure. The area has high levels of population density but has experienced significant population decline since the 1970s due to persistent disadvantage, economic restructuring, lack of housing choice and relative poor educational performance of local schools. Although the number of void properties has been reduced in the last decade due to the right to buy and demolition, housing demand is low. Whilst the area has been subject to numerous urban policy and regeneration initiatives including the City Challenge initiative, Single Regeneration Budget and New Deal for Communities, providing investment in housing, economic development and community development since the 1970s, they have failed to provide long term solutions to the culture of poverty, exclusion and disadvantage in the area. On the 2004 Index of Deprivation the two wards included within the target area fall within the 10% most deprived areas in England within the domains of crime, education, income deprivation and living environment deprivation. Four in ten of the population have no qualifications, one in four people have a limiting long-term illness, and over half of all residents live within rented accommodation.

At the time of writing Area 2 was served by a neighbourhood policing team comprising ten NPOs, six PCSOs, one neighbourhood sergeant and one neighbourhood inspector. It was unusual at the time of the research for Special Constables to be attached to the neighbourhood team. Although covering a smaller geographical area to Area 1, Area 2 is split into six discrete operational areas. Whilst NPOs are allocated to specific beat areas within and across each of these six areas, the three pairs of PCSOs were each given responsibility for two adjoining operational areas. At the time of the research, neighbourhood policing priorities for the area related to criminal damage, drug crime, youth disorder, vehicle crime and anti-social behaviour.

Sampling of PCSOs

Once the case study areas had been selected, I was invited to meet with the community sergeant responsible for the deployment of PCSOs in each area to familiarise them with the research aims and design. Following

this initial meeting, another meeting was arranged between myself and the PCSOs working within each area to request their participation in the study. PCSOs were given a written outline of the rationale, aims and objectives and proposed methodology of the study and were given the opportunity to ask any questions relating to their participation. Each PCSO was given a consent form to complete to confirm their willingness to participate in the study which they were requested to deliver to their community sergeant following the meeting. All twelve PCSOs working within the two case study areas consented to being involved in the study. Fieldwork did not commence until all consent forms had been returned.

Table 1 below provides details of PCSO characteristics by case study area. Individual PCSOs have been assigned alias names in order to protect anonymity. The sample comprised of eight female and four male PCSOs – a high levels of gender diversity than within police officer ranks (Mulchandani and Sigurdsson, 2009). PCSOs were aged between 23 and 56 at the time of writing, with a mean age of 31. Only one of the PCSOs was from a minority ethnic background; a disappointing ratio given PCSOs deployment within ethnically diverse communities. PCSOs were involved in a wide range of occupations and career paths prior to becoming PCSOs including telecommunications, retail and the leisure industry. Whilst none of the PCSOs had prior experience of police work, two male PCSOs, PCSO Elliot and PCSO Lowe, had previously worked in the armed forces for a period of four years and eighteen years respectively and therefore had experience of working within a hierarchical organisation similar to that within the police organisation.

Officer	Case Study Area	Gender	Ethnicity	Age	Previous Occupation
PCSO Spencer	1	Male	White British	30	Leisure
PCSO Sparks	1	Female	White British	24	Administration
PCSO Carruthers	1	Female	White British	44	Tourism
PCSO Slater	1	Female	Mixed White & Asian	38	Business Management
PCSO Preston	1	Male	White British	25	Telecommunications
PCSO Jameson	1	Female	White British	23	Graduate
PCSO Elliot	2	Male	White British	31	Armed Forces
PCSO Brooks	2	Female	White British	27	Retail
PCSO Wilson	2	Female	White British	24	Telecommunications
PCSO Clark	2	Female	White British	28	Legal
PCSO Lowe	2	Male	White British	56	Armed Forces
PCSO Fisher	2	Female	White British	24	Agriculture

Table 1: PCSO Characteristics by Case Study Area.

Seven out of the twelve PCSOs engaged in the study held strong aspirations to become police officers, with all seven having previously applied to the force to become police officers prior to becoming PCSOs. Of

those who held strong aspirations to become police officers, three (PCSO Slater, PCSO Jameson and PCSO Clark) had successfully reapplied to the force during the course of the research and had begun their probationer training prior to the completion of the research, and another, PCSO Brooks, had been initially successful in her application but had become a PCSO as a short term solution to a delayed starting date. The three remaining PCSOs, PCSO Sparks, PCSO Preston and PCSO Elliot, retained an aspiration to become a police officer and were intending to reapply during the next round of recruitment within the force concerned. Three out of the twelve PCSOs had not previously applied to become police officers and had become PCSOs as a means of exploring their suitability to a career in policing. The remaining two PCSOs in the cohort (PCSO Carruthers and PCSO Lowe) did not hold aspirations to become police officers.

Two of the PCSOs, PCSO Carruthers and PCSO Lowe, were in their third careers. PCSO Carruthers had previously worked as a nurse as a first career before becoming involved in tourism where she had worked outside the UK for a period of six years. These two career paths are likely to provide relevant transferable skills for the PCSO role. As mentioned above, PCSO Lowe had previously been employed by the army, had become a heating engineer in order to be closer to his family in the UK, but had been made redundant shortly before becoming a PCSO. PCSO Carruthers and PCSO Lowe were motivated to become PCSOs by a desire to work with the public and support the community. Becoming a PCSO was a second career path for six of the twelve PCSOs. They had become PCSOs out a desire for greater job satisfaction and a sense of challenge within their work; PCSO Spencer had been employed in the hospitality sector working as a concierge for a period of ten years, PCSO Slater had worked as a manager of a hardware company but had wanted to escape office work and PCSO Wilson had worked within a call centre but had lost interest and motivation in the work. Of the three PCSOs who had entered the role as a first career, two had previously been employed in a number of positions but had failed to commit themselves to any of these in the long term. Becoming a PCSO for PCSO Preston and PCSO Fisher was a means of securing more permanent

employment in a role that offered greater challenges and rewards than those in which they had previously been engaged. PCSO Jameson had become a PCSO following the completion of an undergraduate degree having previously only held part time casual work whilst attending university.

All of the PCSOs had previously been employed in occupations involving working with the public. Whilst working in these occupations PCSOs had developed a number of skills pertinent to community support work; PCSO Carruthers had become fluent in Spanish that had proven to be particularly useful in developing relations with Spanish and Portugeuse asylum seekers, PCSO Sparks had previously worked as an administrator within the police and was therefore familiar with organisational procedures and culture, and PCSO Spencer had gained numerous vocational qualifications in customer service. Experience gained within the armed forces provided PCSOs Elliot and Lowe with considerable experience and knowledge of conflict resolution processes and essential negotiating and communication skills. Prior to becoming a PCSO, PCSO Jameson worked as a youth worker providing valuable experience for engaging with young people and had secured a comprehensive level of knowledge and understanding of the criminal justice system through an undergraduate degree in criminology.

There is limited evidence to suggest any significant relationship between gender or age and the policing styles adopted by PCSOs largely due to limitations of the sample. However, a number of general observations might be made concerning female PCSOs and age. The majority of female PCSOs tended to demonstrate higher levels of commitment to engagement than to enforcement, preferring to rely upon communication and negotiation when seeking compliance from the public. PCSOs who tended to adopt a less discretionary, more legalistic style of policing were all under 30 and held strong aspirations to become police officers, whereas PCSOs aged 30 and above and in their second or third careers were more likely to adopt a policing style conducive to engagement and community policing.

Observation

The study involved a total of 300 hours of observation; 150 hours within each case study area. Observations were undertaken independently within each case study for a duration of 6 months; fieldwork commenced in the first case study area at the beginning of May 2007 and ended in November 2007 and commenced in the second area in January 2008 and ended in June 2008. Periods of observations varied in context, scope and duration; PCSOs were observed whilst on patrol, when in the station, when dealing with incidents, and during encounters with members of the public. A total of thirty-two periods of observation were undertaken within each case study area, with each period of observation lasting between three and eight hours. PCSOs were observed when working in pairs for the most part but were also observed when working individually and when working alongside neighbourhood police officers (NPOs). Individual periods of observation were determined by variation in the shift pattern of PCSOs, annual leave and PCSOs leaving the role to become police officers and therefore could not be carefully controlled. Whilst PCSOs are each allocated a partner PCSO whom they share patrols, it is not uncommon for PCSOs to work alongside other PCSOs working within the team when their partner PCSO is on annual leave, training, or on sick leave. For this reason, the number of hours over which each PCSO was observed varied from 20 to 79 hours. In the first case study area, 103 of the total 150 hours of observation occurred after 6pm compared to 86 in the second case study area. Table 2 below illustrates the frequency and duration of observations conducted with each PCSO across both case study areas.

Officer	Case study area	Number of observations	Number of hours observed
PCSO Spencer	1	9 (2 single, 7 paired)	36
PCSO Sparks	1	10 (1 single, 9 paired)	36
PCSO Carruthers	1	8 (all paired)	34
PCSO Slater	1	9 (2 single, 7 paired)	40
PCSO Preston	1	6 (2 single, 4 paired)	23
PCSO Jameson	1	9 (2 single, 7 paired)	33
PCSO Elliot	2	13 (3 single, 10 paired)	51
PCSO Brooks	2	5 (all paired)	20
PCSO Wilson	2	19 (4 single, 15 paired)	79
PCSO Clark	2	7 (all paired)	30
PCSO Lowe	2	6 (1 single, 4 paired)	22
PCSO Fisher	2	7 (2 single, 5 paired)	32

Table 2: Record of Observations by PCSO

Participant observation is an essential hallmark of ethnographic research as the researcher is immersed in the lived experiences of those whose culture they seek to represent. By placing the researcher directly into the field of study to observe those studied, participant observation aims to give the researcher an insiders' view to enable as complete an understanding as possible of the cultural meanings and social structures of the group and how these are interrelated, (Aull-Davies, 1999). It is this close interaction and engagement between the observer and observed that enables mutually understood expectations and meanings to be observed and interpreted (Wolcott 1998, in Ely et al 1994; 44). The key challenge for the researcher is to become socialised into and accepted within the culture being studied since their participation in the field becomes the main means of verifying their account, (Ellen, 1984). Observing and interpreting PCSO decision making and action is an essential element of understanding how PCSOs give meaning to their role and to their relationships with each other and the community, of which cannot be achieved through any other means.

Definitions of participant observation frequently distinguish between participation and non-participation, although this suggests that the nonparticipant observer plays no recognised role within group activities (Atkinson and Hammersley 1994). Participant observations however can involve varying levels of participation, from non to full participation, and variation in roles adopted by the observer, from full to marginal involvement in the activities being observed. The widely used fourfold typology of researcher roles developed by Gold (1958) and later Junker (1960); complete observer, observer as participant, participant as observer and complete participant, provides a more subtle analysis of degrees of participation. Since the primary concern of the study is to gain an appreciative understanding of working practices, community engagement and the structural context under which PCSOs operate, an 'observer as participant' field role was deemed most appropriate. Such a role enabled the researcher to accompany PCSOs in execution of their duties without requiring direct participation in such duties or raising any ethical issues in terms of deception. However, as recognised by Junker (1960) and Van Maanen (1978), the roles adopted during the study were not fixed, but shifted as relations and therefore trust developed. Indeed, there were times when PCSOs would welcome my input regarding incidents and/or individuals encountered on patrol and would ask me to assist in conducting duties implying a role of the full participant whereas on return to the station or in the presence of sworn officers my role would become more detached resembling the role of the complete observer.

The increased capacity for the development of rapport and insight that accompanies an appreciative approach provides an increased risk of over involvement. Empathy with PCSO participants did lead to a greater affiliation with the challenges faced by PCSOs, particularly with regards to managing the limitations of their role and dealing with challenges to their authority and legitimacy. There were occasions when such affiliation led to engagement in PCSO activities such as helping to carry empty bottles of alcohol confiscated from young people and assisting PCSOs in security marking private property. Having observed the lack of respect received by PCSOs from some sections

of the community and the difficulties experienced in securing compliance, there was also a degree of moral affiliation with PCSOs. Despite my participation and moral alignment with PCSOs, there wasn't the opportunity to become a full participant or to use Adler and Adler's (1987, in de Laine, 2000) term, to go fully native, since my inclusion within PCSO activities was always controlled and limited as a result of my outsider status.

Researcher roles and identities within the field also differ according to interpretation. Amongst PCSOs I embodied the observer as participant role and therefore did not reach full member status, whereas when accompanying PCSOs on patrol it was not uncommon for members of the public to mistake me for a police officer, albeit one in plain clothes. As a rule I left it up to the individual PCSO to decide how to introduce me to members of the public, if at all; during friendly exchanges they tended to introduce me as a colleague or to reveal that I was conducting research, whereas in situations of conflict, PCSOs frequently preferred young people to perceive me as an officer since this bolstered their legitimacy amongst such individuals. Therefore, whilst the observer as participant role was dominant, research roles and identities overlapped and varied throughout the period of observation depending upon the specific context and those engaged in interaction.

Whilst the level of participation depends on the response of the individuals and/or group and whether the researcher is treated as an insider or outsider, the level of participation is not an accurate assessment of the quality or success of the research. Rather, Van Maanen (1995; 43) argues that whilst there is a liminal balance between being an insider and outsider, a measure of success is how comfortable the researcher feels and to what extent those observed forget about their external status. Certainly, throughout the course of the research, PCSOs frequently confided in me about cases of officer misconduct and/or politically sensitive information concerning organisational developments that my status often appeared more that of an insider than outsider.

Opportunities to participate can increase as fieldwork progresses but observation remains the most important consideration, as Rabinow (1977, in Aull-Davies, 1999; 79-80) explains,

> "Observation....is the governing term in the pair...However much one moves in the direction of participation, it is always the case that one is still both an outsider and an observer...In the dialectic between the poles of observation and participation, participation changes the anthropologist and leads him to new observation, whereupon new observation changes how he participates".

The observer as participant has the potential to provide insight if the researcher becomes accepted and trusted into the group. The success of a study is therefore largely determined by the capacity of the researcher to manage impressions in a way that facilitates observation and insight and erodes barriers to social access, (Walsh, 1998). Impression management and demonstrating sociability was a particularly important means of avoiding suspicion by police officers and to avoid questioning from becoming threatening. Since the observer is the primary research instrument within participant observation, observing itself is necessarily reflexive. The observer as participant is required to be sensitive to assumptions, to consider observations within their wider context and to be reflexive in relation to their own participation, observing interactions and action introspectively in an attempt to overcome the effects of misinformation and facilitate acceptance by the group. However, it is equally important to acknowledge the potential bias resulting from being a part of the observed behaviour itself that can effect reliability and validity (Tedlock, 1991, Spano, 2005). In his research into observer bias in police observational research, Spano (2005) however suggests that such negative effects aren't determined. He argued that rapport between officers and the observer improves over time, that police officers do not shield observers from the more brutal aspects of police work and found little evidence of observer bias in the form of going native or observer burnout, effects typically associated with ethnographic studies.

Recorded notes were not taken during the initial 20 hours in each area in order for the researcher to become acquainted with PCSOs, police officers and target communities and for PCSOs to become accustomed to my presence and so to encourage the development of trust. PCSOs were fully informed that written notes would be taken during observations but that every effort would be made to avoid doing so in view of members of the public. Field notes tended therefore to be cursory, recorded hastily whilst on patrol or immediately after returning to the police station. These 'scratch notes' (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002) frequently took the form of abbreviations, key words and word associations that utilised as memory triggers for more detailed writing of field notes following each period of observation. Field notes are therefore inevitably subject to the discretion of the researcher and what he/she deems interesting or worthy of annotation. There was a tendency to record events in the order in which they occurred and within the routines of PCSOs themselves. Whilst having the added advantage of supporting the recall of situations and specific details, both Hammersley and Atkinson, (1983) and Wolfinger (2002) suggest that utilising these unique time tables within social settings to structure note taking can be more attentive to members' meanings. Since the research was concerned with appreciating the working experience of PCSOs, and delineating PCSO talk and action (Waddington, 1999) recordings were made in relation to the particular physical places, particular activities and incidents, interactions and conversations between PCSOs and between PCSOs and police officers, decision making practices and use of discretion, situations of conflict between PCSOs and the public, and emotions, attitudes and values expressed by PCSOs. As suggested by Spradley, (1980, in Wolfinger, 2002), Ely et al (1994) and Walsh (1998), the focus of observations inevitably shifted as the research progressed; from a general overview, recording as much as possible since the trivial and mundane may be crucial in subsequent analysis, to a more narrow focus on the detailed, concrete and contextual aspects of the situation (Walsh, 1998). Where practical, interpretations of events, actions and interactions were shared with PCSOs to check for clarity and to increase validity.

Interviews

Ethnographic interviews were an inevitable part of observational research with the PCSOs. Simply by accompanying PCSOs on patrol and sharing common experiences meant that conversation would spontaneously occur. During the early stages of the research conversation was focused upon building rapport and trust, however, as familiarity and trust was developed with individual PCSOs, conversation shifted from the more general to the specific and PCSOs became increasingly willing to reflect upon their experiences and express their views. The challenge for the researcher once relations have been established, according to Flick (2009), is to shape the conversation into interviews drawing upon common experiences and towards issues of interest in a systematic way. However, it was important that such efforts did not take place too early in field relationships as to jeopardise relations. As identified by Spradley (1979, 58), the researcher must "slowly introduce new elements to assist informants to respond as informants...introducing them too quickly will make interviews become like a formal interrogation. Rapport will evaporate and informants may discontinue their co-operation".

In addition to such ethnographic interviews, semi structured individual interviews were conducted with each of the twelve PCSOs engaged in the study, each lasting between one and two and a half hour. Interviews were recorded in order to enable attention to be entirely focused on the participant rather than writing field notes. Interviews were an essential component of the research strategy for four key reasons. Firstly, they were a way of obtaining the depth of knowledge required about PCSO values, attitudes and orientations to the job that could not be obtained through observation alone. Webb and Webb (1932; 130 in Brewer, 2000, 67) describe in depth interviews as 'conversations with a purpose'. Interviews were loosely structured emphasising the active involvement of the researcher as facilitator to encourage the interviewee to talk. The notion of the interview as a conversation with a purpose emphasises the importance of steering the conversation towards particular issues and concerns and making judgements in relation to the length of time that should be devoted to a particular topic.

Second, conducting individual interviews enabled PCSOs to express themselves without the presence of colleagues that might hinder their participation and responses. Thirdly, since observations occurred sporadically over a period of six months, interviews offered an opportunity to develop understanding of PCSO activity and events that occurred outside periods of observation. Fourthly, as identified by Waddington (1999) interviews were a means of comparing PCSO accounts of what they 'say' they do, during interview, with what they 'do' in practice, as measured during observations.

The interviews occurred following the observation period for three principal reasons. Firstly, relationships had already been established between the researcher and PCSOs and it was hoped that this common experience would facilitate more open discussion and conversation more conducive to ethnographic interviewing. Secondly, it was anticipated that particular incidents, interactions or decisions encountered whilst on patrol could be revisited during interview to achieve greater insight and to understand the meanings individual PCSOs attached to specific events, successes or challenges in their work since there was often insufficient time, opportunity or privacy for individual reflection on the street. And thirdly, a major objective of interviewing the PCSOs was to provide a means of developing lines of inquiry or themes that had arisen during the process of conducting observations. Interviews were loosely structured around five key areas; self/identity and approach, role tensions, value and contribution, community relations and relations with the organisation. Whilst these key areas were utilised to direct conversation, participants were encouraged to reflect upon their 'journey' as a PCSO, discuss their acquisition of knowledge and craft skills and their wider position within the organisation.

Burns (2000) highlights a number of advantages of semi-structured interviews. For example, it provides an opportunity for the respondent to explore and discuss their own perspective rather than the perspective of the researcher being imposed on the respondent. Furthermore, the respondent is also able to interpret the research area and lines of inquiry within their own framework of understanding and through their own language which may

increase the validity of the research process (Legard, Keegan and Ward 2003) as new forms of knowledge are produced or created. Semi-structured interviews can also help to promote reflexivity and can be 'tailored to reflect the experiential context of each respondent resulting in a rich data set, which when used in triangulation with other methods, can increase validity and help refine the development of themes and concepts. Whilst the researcher uses a range of probes to achieve depth of answer, interviews are more likely to be interactive when rapport has previously been established enabling opinions, feelings and beliefs to be discussed. In encouraging participants to talk, some qualitative researchers assert that the researcher him/herself should also disclose some details about themselves since there is 'no intimacy without reciprocity' (Oakley, 1981: 49). Informal conversation between the researcher and PCSOs had taken place throughout observations as a means of developing rapport. As suggested by Legard, Keegan and Ward (2003), where participants expressed views that I personally disagreed with, efforts were made to uncover reasons for such views rather than expressing my own. This particularly applied when discussing the effectiveness of the criminal justice system or crown prosecution service since to offer personal views would jeopardise the validity of accounts.

There are however a number of disadvantages or risks associated with semi-structured interviews, particularly the imbalance in power between the interviewer and interviewee. Whilst efforts were made to encourage PCSOs to lead the interview and familiarity had for the most part already been established, the act of questioning alone creates a power asymmetry between the researcher and the participant (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009) that shapes the knowledge produced. Not only does the researcher determine the flow of questions deciding which responses to pursue for elaboration and those to leave but the interview itself is an instrumental dialogue whereby the researcher interprets the interviewee's statements in a way that supports their own agenda. This unavoidable power differential may have had a number of undesirable effects including withholding

information, inhibiting the flow of conversation and interviewees giving socially desirable answers.

Focus Groups

Two focus groups were conducted with neighbourhood police officers working within neighbourhood police teams in each case study area. Both focus groups lasted one hour, involved four participants, took place within the station and were not recorded. Whilst focus groups tend to involve larger numbers (Finch and Lewis, 2003), participants were selected on the basis of opportunity. Officers who had initially been willing to participate were unable to do so due to operational duties, appearances at court or annual leave. Participants were encouraged to discuss the contribution of PCSOs towards neighbourhood police work and satisfaction with current powers of enforcement, reactions of the local community towards PCSOs, and the skills of policing work and reassurance.

Since the purpose of focus groups is to generate data through interaction between participants and the role of the researcher tends to be non-directive, it was hoped that greater insight would be generated than if individual interviews or group interviews were used. The decision not to record the discussions was informed by a sense that 'politics of mistrust' (Hughes, 2000) existed amongst a number of officers whereby NBMs frequently expressed suspicion about the purposes of the research. Indeed, one conversation with officers in the first case study area revealed concerns that I had a hidden microphone to record and potentially disclose information about practices and/or views expressed. Clearly, recording the focus groups would not only fuel such suspicion, but would hinder discussion and severely affect the validity of knowledge gained.

All eight participants worked alongside the PCSOs engaged in the study, five of whom had been working within the team on the implementation of PCSOs and two had supervisory responsibilities for PCSOs. The benefits of familiarity between participants was clear from the outset; their shared

experience of police work, the organisation and working alongside PCSOs provided common reference points and shared understandings between participants facilitating more in depth discussion and reflection of issues raised. As identified by Kitzinger and Barbour (1999, 8-9), pre-existing groups such as these are “the networks in which people might normally discuss the sorts of issues likely to be raised in the research session, and the naturally occurring group is one of the most important contexts in which ideas are formed and decisions made”. Thus, discussion within both groups was able to draw upon reflections about the reassurance policy agenda, the nature of their contact with PCSOs and the impact of their introduction upon their own workload, their perceptions about ‘what makes a good PCSO’ and perceptions of the value of PCSOs and their integration into the organisation. As documented by Bloor et al (2002), belonging to a pre-existing group also enabled participants to both corroborate accounts, as occurred during a discussion of an arrest in which a PCSO had become involved, and challenge discrepancies between expressed beliefs and behaviour, as was the case involving incidents whereupon PCSOs had failed to exercise good judgement and when one officer was recalling.

Nonetheless, there are a number of potential drawbacks in using a pre-existing group of officers requiring careful management of the researcher. As suggested by Finch and Lewis (2003) there is a danger that shared assumptions may prevent issues from being fully elaborated because their meaning is taken for granted. Whilst observation had provided basic knowledge of the structure of organisational practices and social relationships between officers, it was often necessary to ask officers to clarify technical vocabulary used and for greater explanation of incidents that had not been subject to observation. Furthermore, dynamics and group norms between participants meant that discussion would be easily become diverted to unrelated issues whereby great effort was required to redirect conversation back to relevant issues. In addition, there was a clear sense that certain officers tended to look to those with greater experience and of a higher rank to initiate and dominate discussion. Whilst objectives of the focus group were given at the outset of each discussion, it was difficult to manage

this dynamic and tease out differences in views, particularly as a woman in a male dominated environment such as the police organisation. This will be elaborated further in the section entitled Politics and Ethics of Research.

Literature Review

An essential aspect of preparation and component of research design is a review of existing findings, research methodologies and theoretical interpretations and arguments presented in existing work within the field. Themes, perspectives, concepts, questions raised and gaps in knowledge within the existing literature not only informs the nature and extent of knowledge within a chosen area, but shapes research objectives and methodological approaches to add to knowledge already gained. As illustrated by Strauss and Corbin (1997; 49), an appreciation of the relevant literature can enhance sensitivity to subtle nuances within primary data, can support making comparisons with primary data, and can help formulate questions utilised in interviews and observations.

Sources utilised within the review of the literature included single authored books, edited collections, journal articles, unpublished theses, conference proceedings, criminal justice policy reports, government legislation, police research reports and methodological writings. The search began with a critical review of the studies concerning community policing and reassurance and the policy and political context surrounding the introduction of PCSOs, before moving onto a study of police culture, discretion and decision-making, then to police socialisation and the police craft. Key concepts and search terms were identified and adapted throughout the research but included (sub) culture, police discretion, reassurance, community, authority, police socialisation, legitimacy and crime control. Once identified, keyword searches using the following terms; PCSO, police, patrol, community, reassurance, culture, socialisation and police reform were conducted via online databases such as Ingenta and Springer Link, search engines such as Google and Altavista, and via Northumbria University's in-

house online search facility. Once identified, the same keywords were utilised to search individual journal articles for relevant material.

Data Handling and Analysis

It is not uncommon for analysis of qualitative data, particularly ethnographic research, to occur throughout the data collection process since hypotheses and analytical categories are not yet determined. As identified by Becker (1970; 26-27 in Boulton and Hammersley, 2006; 251), within participant observation research, “analysis is carried on sequentially, important parts of the analysis being made while the researcher is still gathering his data”. Tentative analysis of observational data therefore commenced after the first period of observation and continued throughout the process of data collection.

Before data analysis could begin each period of observation needed to be prepared, written up from jottings and notes and numbered by the date it which it occurred. Whilst every effort was made to minimise inference, provide concrete description and ensure personal reflections remained distinct from the raw data, fieldnotes are subject to memory and selectivity even at the early stages of data collection. As argued by Wolcott (1990; 35 in Silverman, 1993; 88) “the critical task...is not to accumulate all the data you can, but to ‘can’ [get rid of] most of the data you accumulate. This requires constant winnowing”. Fieldnotes are necessarily and inevitably subjective constructs as the observer continually makes judgements about the importance and relevance of events, actions and behaviour they observe, (Sanger, 1996). As Van Maanen (1988) identifies, “Fieldnotes are gnomic, shorthand reconstructions of events, observations, and conversations that took place in the field. They are composed well after the fact as inexact notes to oneself and represent simply one of many levels of textualisation set off by experience”. Not only does ethnography afford much discretion to the researcher, but notes taken whilst in the field inform complete notes and the focus of the research narrows over time influencing what the ethnographer chooses to draw attention to and describe (Wolfinger, 2002).

Interview data also goes through a similar process of preparation. Conventions for transcription differ according to the purpose and methodological approach of the study and judgement of the individual researcher. Judgements about significant categories or themes had already been made prior to the interview as is the requirement of semi-structured interviews and since interviews were interrelated to observations of PCSOs. There were a number of pragmatic considerations that impacted upon the quality of interview data. Firstly, PCSOs were instructed by supervisory officers to keep their radios switched on during the interview (albeit at a low volume) causing the interview to be subject to interruptions and causing somewhat of a distraction. Secondly, interviews were conducted within a busy police station where noise was not only a frequent distraction but affected the quality of the recording. Thirdly, it was not uncommon for the interview to be relocated elsewhere when the room, usually a custody suite or meeting room, was required by an officer(s). Furthermore, since this study was not concerned with discourse analysis, less detail and precision, for example, pauses in discussion and non-verbal cues was required from the interview signifying another stage of selection from the raw data.

Observational data from each case study area was then analysed using manual content analysis which is also referred to as thematic qualitative analysis (Flick, 2009). All logs and transcripts were closely read to support familiarisation with the material and to identifying significant relationships between events, behaviour and comments. Informed by research objectives and themes identified within the existing literature, a wide range of categories or themes were identified and marked on each observation log. This stage is particularly important when handling large amounts of data since it enables the researcher to understand the character of the data and to control for original assumptions, for example, of a traditional police culture (Boulton and Hammersely, 2006). Following this initial identification of categories or subcategories, similarities and differences within and patterns and relationships between all data assigned to the same category were identified and explored. Fieldnotes were subject to another close reading with the intention of identifying the unique features of each

case study area and confirming the accuracy and recurrence of subcategories or codes. This process, identified as ‘constant comparative method’ by Glaser and Strauss (1967), inevitably leads to some categories becoming more prominent than others as data is transformed from loosely defined categories into more analytical, definitive concepts. Significant categories identified from the original data were revisited for accuracy and recurrence for the purpose of mapping typicality and meaning as opposed to quantification (May, 2001).

Subcategories were then refined and grouped into wider themes – for example, skill development, authority, legitimacy, role conflict, performance culture – and each observation was illustrated and colour coded according to these themes. Interview data was similarly handled becoming subject to the same iterative process. The relevance of themes were explored on an interview by interview basis (Rapley 2007) and whilst additional data and differences between case study areas emerged, themes identified through content analysis of fieldnotes were also identified within both the interview transcripts and notes from focus groups thereby adding to the validity of findings. These overarching themes were then used to frame the presentation of findings.

Krippendorff (2004) highlights one of the advantages of content analysis namely that it allows the researcher to infer meanings and produce understanding in relationship to phenomena that would be difficult or impossible otherwise to observe. Furthermore, Snape and Spencer (2003) suggest that content analysis is useful in capturing and interpreting common sense substantive meanings in the data. This is consistent with the exploratory nature of the research which seeks to identify PCSO experiences of providing reassurance and exerting authority within their broader experiences of police work within the organisation. However, content analysis can also be criticised for its potential to produce biased results whereby the researcher unconsciously excludes or includes data which support their theoretical viewpoint (Rapley 2007). Presenting findings accurately and honestly is considered in the British Society of Criminology’s Code of Ethic and I adhered to this by presenting excerpts of data to support

all of my findings, providing a level of transparency to the data analysis process.

Politics and Ethics of Research

Fieldwork, particularly the use of observational methods, is replete with a multitude of obstacles and contradictions that inform the nature and construction of ethnographic accounts. Indeed, Punch (1994; 85) argues that fieldwork represents “a demanding craft that involves both coping with multiple negotiations and continually dealing with ethical dilemmas”. Despite such recognition, personal and anecdotal accounts of the challenges of fieldwork are rarely documented (Van Maanen 1988). Fine and Martin (1995) suggest that discussions of subjective experiences of fieldwork are avoided as a means to protect objectivity, whilst Punch (1994) suggests that acknowledgement of research difficulties might be considered by some as an indication of failure. Even if they are acknowledged, rarely do researchers explain how such challenges or dilemmas were resolved (Chatterton 1978, Van Maanen 1978). Not only do predicaments within fieldwork inform the research process and data collection, but acknowledging the constraints under which a study has been conducted is important for assessing both its reliability and the degree to which the author has practicing self-censorship (Norris, 1993). This section will first examine the key research difficulties experienced within this study; the negotiation of access and ‘taking sides’, risk and danger involved in observing the police, and the role of gender in the shaping the research, before going on to explore ethical considerations of informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity.

The issue of gatekeepers is of central consideration within police research given the antipathy and distrust of the academic researcher to the police organisation (Van Maanen, 1978, Fielding 1990, Liebling 2001). Even when physical access has been negotiated and secured, the researcher is often subject to more subtle organisational control in terms of the phenomena he or she is exposed to and must negotiate social access with those they seek to observe and understand. As argued by Walters (2003) the

challenge for criminologists is not just ‘getting in’ but ‘getting on’ with those encountered in the process of conducting the research. Whilst those at the higher level of the police organisation might be concerned with the image of the organisation and the potential challenge of research findings to their continued legitimacy, those at the lower levels of the police organisation, in this case front line officers and PCSOs, are worried about the image of their own unit and themselves and the potential for recrimination and discipline. Certainly, there were occasions throughout the research where I was prevented from accompanying PCSOs when supporting officers on particular operations. Whilst presented as concerns about my safety in being involved in such activities, it was equally likely that the commanding officer was concerned of the risk of my exposure to police practices. The challenge therefore becomes “how to circumvent the minefield of defences that protect the concealed reality of police work” (Punch, 1989; 178). Efforts to do so involved prolonged observation and developing rapport with PCSOs by presenting myself as an ally rather than an evaluator or critic of the organisation. Gaining access is therefore an ongoing process of negotiation and renegotiation (Hughes, 2000) in a bid to reassure and gain the trust of participants.

In an effort to develop rapport, present themselves as trustworthy and in striving to supersede their outsider status with that of the ‘insider’, the researcher must balance different relationships and competing interests between different groups, for example, between PCSOs and senior officers, through role playing. Whilst occupational secrecy might have inhibited the honesty of informants, there were times when the PCSOs made me feel that I had been accepted into their group; they divulged politically sensitive information to me about organisational policies, informed me of cases of officer misconduct and examples of easing behaviour (Cain, 1973) and invited me to socialise with them. Conversely, as identified by Punch (1989), there are inevitably aspects of their working lives that are dangerous for PCSOs to discuss with anyone external to the organisation regardless of the level of trust developed.

Observational research implies that the researcher develops a close relationship with those observed. Accounts of 'going native' (Adler and Adler 1987, in de Laine, 2000) suggest that such involvement can prevent a sense of 'detached wonder' or critical distance leading to a biased account. However, there are others who argue that achieving a balance between involvement and detachment is the price of 'being there' (Wolcott 1995, 95). In adopting an appreciative stance to understanding PCSO experience and culture, there is perhaps an even greater risk of 'taking sides' (Liebling, 2001) and of over involvement and identification with the group. The notion of 'sympathetic detachment' has been seen as the mode of practice in modern ethnography, whereby the observer maintains marginality from the group, and reflects the stance adopted in this study, appreciating PCSO experiences and challenges whilst reminding myself of my responsibility to the research agenda and purpose. However, it is equally valid to suggest that the potential for an appreciative stance to subvert the validity of the study is mitigated by the research process itself. According to Ditton (1977) participant observation is essentially manipulative and extractive (Ditton, 1977, Eisner 1991 cited in Noaks and Wincup, 2004) as the researcher removes themselves from the field once data has been collected. Punch (1989; 189) takes a similar view but suggests that both parties are engaged in deception suggesting "the subjects are conning you until you gain their trust, and then, once you have their confidence you begin conning them" (Punch, 1989: 189). Indeed, there was an element of 'faking friendship' (Stacey 1988, in de Laine, 2000, Dunscombe and Jessop, 2002) in my efforts to develop trust with the PCSOs. In dealing with such concerns I reassured myself that striving for empathy was not the same as friendship, PCSOs were aware of the parameters of that friendship and that I was not there to expose negative behaviour but to understand the challenges of their role.

Previous ethnographic studies of frontline policing have also highlighted danger and violence as an inevitable reality of observational research (Uildriks and van Mastrigt 1991 in Westmarland, 2001b, Punch 1993) whereby researchers are exposed to people, area and situations of

risk. Assurances were given to gatekeepers within the present study that an assessment of likely risks in order to minimise exposure to violence and threats to safety in accompanying PCSOs on patrol. Risk assessment involved consideration of patrol locations and potential conflict with members of the public that would be undertaken prior to and during each period of observation with the PCSOs, and would determine whether observation would continue and whether I would remove myself from the field. Sensitivity to potential risks inevitably developed through experience (Lee, 1995); whilst PCSOs are exposed to hostility from members of the public (see chapter 6) my personal safety was rarely under threat. There was however one situation whereby my safety was compromised as a result of my ambiguous research role and an over identification with the PCSOs. The first incident occurred whilst on patrol with one PCSO late one evening. The PCSO had ran off in pursuit of suspect after spotting the person concerned whilst on patrol, leaving me alone on the street. Whilst awaiting his return, a victim of domestic assault came out of her home and approached me mistaking me for a plain clothes police officer. She had been assured that she would receive police protection following the release of the perpetrator from prison earlier that day but was still awaiting the arrival of an officer. Aware of her heightened anxiety and need for reassurance that the PCSO would promptly return due to leaving me unaccompanied, I chose not to disclose my identity, instead seeking to reassure her that the PCSO would make the necessary enquiries on her return. Clearly if the perpetrator of the assault had arrived in the area I would not only be unable to act but would be placed in danger by failing to disclose my true identity. In this instance I had clearly transgressed an ethical boundary perhaps as a result of becoming swept along with the novelty of the experience

My status as a young, female ‘outsider’ both supported and hindered the research process. In one regard, it is possible that my gender and age not only led to my presence being seen as less threatening but supported the development of rapport with participants, particularly amongst female PCSOs with whom I developed closer relations than others. However, whilst I did not experience any sexual harassment as documented by Reinharz (1992, cited

in Punch, 1994) nor was I subject to any initiation tests (Westmarland, 2000), my status as a young, female, educated outsider also produced barriers to developing rapport with some officers. The masculinised occupational culture meant that police officers frequently apologised for swearing in my presence and on occasion prevented PCSOs from attending certain duties when I was accompanying them for fear of jeopardising my safety. The only available strategy to counteract such stereotyping was to demonstrate resilience to and avoid emotional reactions towards experiences on patrol; in essence to appeal to more masculinised aspects within the police culture.

Whilst acknowledging that no social research is devoid of ethical dilemmas, they are frequently made the more acute for ethnographers due to closer relationships, even moral involvement, developed with participants (Akeroyd (1984; 143). Every effort has been made to adhere to the ethical principles outlined within codes of professional practice as laid down by the British Society of Criminology and British Sociological Association. Whilst such guidelines are important in acknowledging power relations and responsibility to future entry to the field, such guidelines when taken alone are often insufficient to deal with the ethical dilemmas in ethnographic research (Punch, 1993, Miller and Bell, 2002) because “decision making in such matters involves more than cognitive or rational reasoning; decision making draws on intuition, emotions and feelings” (de Laine, 2000; 144).

Guidelines advise that participation should be wholly voluntary and participants should be fully informed of the aims, objectives and purposes of research and where participation begins and ends prior to giving their consent (Miller and Bell 2002, Christians 2005). This study adhered to such guidance whereby all participating PCSOs were asked to complete informed consent forms prior to the commencement of fieldwork and were assured that nothing would be reported to senior officers. However, rationales and objectives for ethnographic research not only evolve as the research progresses implying that those outlined at the outset might be redundant (ibid) but the extent to which PCSOs could effectively refuse or withdraw from the study is questionable due to the hierarchy of consent within the police organisation. Norris (1993; 129) in his observational research with

front line officers, argued that it was often difficult to know whether “having me along constituted an order”. It is unlikely that PCSOs, as civilian members of the organisation, would challenge the directions of a senior officer and refuse to participate in the research. Questions of consent also extend to members of the public who were, albeit indirectly, involved in the research. They did not give their consent to be observed and yet I entered their private lives simply in accompanying PCSOs when dealing with incidents and concerns. However, it is difficult to see how their consent could be secured in prior to each and every encounter with the public whilst retaining validity and without exacerbating observer effects, particularly in relation to young people.

Given the sensitive nature of the study, concerted efforts were made to protect the anonymity of participants. PCSOs were assured that their names would not appear within the finished thesis or any published findings and pseudonyms would be used instead. Research diaries and audio recordings of interviews were securely stored throughout the research and erased on completion. However, the assurance of confidentiality is not always enough to protect the identity of participants. Holdaway (1982) used pseudonyms in his writings on the police but then refers to publications in his bibliography that make it clear that his work was conducted within the Metropolitan Police. Given the rich description involved in observation research and small numbers of PCSO working within each sector, it is feasible that those within the organisation might be able to identify individuals or claim they can even if they are wrong. Assurances of confidentiality are limited in the extent to which they might protect participants from harm. Researchers must also acknowledge that they may encounter situations when in the field that may cause them to breach a promise of confidentiality, for example, officer misconduct or misuse of force. Discretion was used in this study in this regard due to a sense of responsibility for the researched and commitment to appreciation rather than exposure.

Given the various challenges involved in conducting qualitative research, including the development of trust with participants, power differentials between participants and the overlapping of research roles

leading to a conflict of interests, it is not difficult to appreciate that ethical and professional practice requires more than a code of ethics for guidance. Since the challenges of fieldwork can rarely be predicted, these principles can only be used as a means of framing research; ethical dilemmas will inevitable arise and need to be negotiated throughout the research process, only being resolved through individual judgement.

The appreciative theoretical and methodological approach adopted within this research, in reaction to more critical ethnographies of the police organisation, has sought to understand the 'lived experiences' of PCSOs in delivering neighbourhood policing within communities of conflict within the context of their limited authority and legitimacy. Despite the involvement of gatekeepers in the selection and sampling process and the ethical challenges of ethnography, I believe that this study provides unique insight into the operation and deployment of PCSOs and the development of a PCSO occupational culture that has not been achieved by previous research on PCSOs. The results outlined in the next three chapters provide a detailed exploration of the challenges faced by PCSOs in delivering reassurance in an organisation driven by an ethos of crime control.

Chapter 5 - PCSO Ambitions, Skills and the Craft of Policing

Introduction

Entering the hierarchical world of the police organisation to undertake an unprecedented role within public policing, PCSOs must quickly learn the necessary craft skills and competencies to fulfil their duties and demonstrate their value to the organisation. With limited training and without prior experience of police work, they are deployed in target communities with little or no direct supervision and limited direction. This chapter argues that despite good intentions from some individual PCSOs to deliver reassurance and support local communities, they are not motivated by a desire to deliver reassurance but by a desire to become police officers. PCSOs share the same aspirations for action, variety and excitement from the role as police officers (Skolnick, 1966, Van Maanen, 1973, Holdaway, 1983, Young, 1999, Reiner, 2000) but their capacity to realise such aspirations is limited due to restrictions of the role. Those PCSOs who hold an ambition to become police officers subsequently utilise the role as a means of gaining desired skills and competencies within police work to support future applications. In an effort to feed into crime control activities and integrate themselves into the organisation and thus secure a sense of value, PCSOs align themselves to the dominant organisational culture. However, PCSOs' distinct occupational experience and position within the organisation can also lead the majority of PCSOs to develop alternative cultural characteristics and orientations to their role that are not shared by fully sworn officers.

Drawing upon field observations and personal reflections of PCSOs during interviews and where appropriate the reflections of neighbourhood police officers (NPOs), this chapter is divided into three sections. The first section focuses on the relationship between PCSO motivations to the role and ambitions to become a police officer. The second section considers the challenges experienced by PCSOs in acquiring the necessary craft skills and competencies to enable them to operate as effective members of the organisation and to support future applications to become a police officer.

The third and final section examines PCSO adherence to the occupational culture of neighbourhood police officers and of the organisation.

Section 1 - Motivation, Ambition and Commitment

When invited to discuss their personal motivations in applying for the role, PCSOs framed their decision within the context of neighbourhood policing. In recognition of the potential for the role to satisfy the more altruistic aspects of police work, PCSOs emphasised the desire to support local communities, tackle lower level disorder and improve feelings of safety and security. Despite research evidence demonstrating the lack of status afforded to community police work (Tilley, 2004, Greene, 2000, Sadd and Grinc, 1994), individual PCSOs engaged in this study recognised the potential for the role to function as a means of building relationships with local communities that had hitherto suffered due to the conflicting demands of reactive police work.

> "Initially I was very proud [to become a PCSO]. Erm, a great deal of pride to be connected to [name of force] and that you're there to help the community ....you don't for a second think about the limitations, you're just eager to get in there and try to make a difference" (Interview with PCSO Spencer, p1).

> "I just remember thinking that even though we weren't going to be involved in crime very much that it was something new and a chance to get out into the community and make a difference" (Interview with PCSO Slater, p3).

> "We all know that the police are stretched and can't always deal with the things that matter most to a lot of us, you know, drinking on the streets, the way their area looks and what have you, so when I saw the advert I thought not only was it different from what I'd done before and I was after a new challenge, but it could potentially give a lot of job satisfaction in helping people" (PCSO Elliot, Observation B7, p4).

Indeed, for PCSO Jameson her aspiration to become a fully sworn police officer was ultimately driven by a desire to become engaged in community police work;

> "Moving people on, reacting to jobs as they come in is a short term solution, I wanna help with the long term solution...That's why I wanted to join the police, because I wanted to have an impact with the community...I wouldn't want to be a shift cop. I'd want to be an NPO to actually work alongside the community, going to meetings, getting involved. I don't want to just run around after people, reacting to incidents as they come in" (Interview with PCSO Jameson, p19).

However, despite such benevolent motivations for applying for the position, commitment to community support tended for the vast majority to be overshadowed by their commitment to becoming fully sworn police officers. This is not unusual. Previous studies examining PCSO recruitment such as those of Crawford et al, (2004) and Johnston (2006, 2007) clearly identified a high proportion of PCSOs operating within the West Yorkshire and Metropolitan Police forces with such aspirations. Of the twelve PCSOs engaged in the study, ten had aspirations to become a police officer and subsequently framed their decision to become a PCSO within the context of its capacity to provide a useful testing ground for assessing their suitability as a police officer and/or as a means of supporting their application to become a police officer. Thus, whilst PCSOs might enter the role with benevolent intentions of supporting the community, their commitment to the role is framed within the context of their motivation to become a police officer;

> "I had been working in the police [within an administrative civilian role] before I applied to do this. I'd applied for the force [as a fully sworn officer] but had got knocked back so they suggested I apply for this to get experience and to support my applications in the future. I wasn't put off when I didn't get in so I thought it would look better doing this than my previous job when I next apply" (PCSO Sparks, Observation A11, p5).

> “I was ready to do something different but didn’t know whether being a police officer was right for me or not. So, I thought it would make sense to do this for a while, see how I get on and then if I’m still interested, it’ll stand me in good stead when I do apply to be a PC” (PCSO Fisher, Observation B10, p3).

Half of the PCSOs engaged in this study had become a PCSO following a failed application to become a police officer and had been advised by the organisation that the PCSO role could support future applications to become a police officer. However, the extent to which the PCSO role lived up to such expectations was contested. Discussions with PCSOs whilst on patrol suggest that prior experience as a PCSO does not guarantee a successful application to become a police officer. A number of PCSOs expressed concerns whilst on patrol about the continued promotion of the role as a stepping stone to becoming a PCSO both by the force concerned and from the Home Office.

> “They promoted it as a stepping stone so they could fill the numbers but people are coming in and finding that it’s not doing that. It’s a good eye opener if anything and it does help once you get to the assessment centre stage as you can draw upon your experiences a lot more but it doesn’t always get you past the first hurdle” (Interview with PCSO Carruthers, p28).

> “Even at the assessment centre they promote it as a way to get experience before going into the police...If you don’t quite get through when you apply, say you get between 50 and 59% cos the pass mark in [force concerned] is 60%...then you’ll more than likely get offered to be a PCSO. But, it doesn’t work like that. I was sitting there when they were saying how it stands you in good stead thinking that’s rubbish. I had to apply three times until I got to the assessment centre and I know PCSOs from other sectors who’ve had the same trouble. I couldn’t even use [name of sergeant] as my referee. They say it gives others an unequal advantage, whereas I think it puts us at a disadvantage” (PCSO Clark, Observation, B1, p1).

These comments suggest that experience as a PCSO does not positively support aspirations to become a police officer and might even impact negatively upon their applications to become police officers. Nonetheless, such contradictions between rhetoric of the organisation and the Home Office did not deter those PCSOs with strong aspirations to become police officers. As a signal of their determination, five of the six PCSOs who had applied to become a police officer prior to becoming a PCSO had achieved success, albeit only been successful on their third and fourth application. Contrary to speculations by Johnston (2006), the majority of PCSOs engaged in this study did not 'redefine' their original motivation in light of previous failed attempts to become police officers. Those more determined PCSOs understood that the role could be utilised as a mechanism to obtain experience and acquire key skills and competencies pertinent to the role of a police officer providing they adopt a wider orientation to the job;

> "A lot of the PCSOs at the minute are coming into the job half-heartedly, as a stop gap as they're waiting to go into the police. It's not something they'd choose to do and they're just sitting it out" (PCSO Clark, Observation B5, p3).
>
> PCSO Clark -"The job is dull if you come in and all you want to do is walk the streets. But if you want to gain the most from this it's all about seeing the potential variation, trying to experience as much as possible, showing your initiative beyond just patrolling and wanting to become involved in what the NPOs are doing and how you can best work with the community".
>
> PCSO Wilson –"Yeah, I mean if that's all you do then you can't expect to stand out from the rest [of the applications]. This is definitely a job where you get out what you put in, so potentially if you're willing and committed to making the most of your time here you can potentially learn loads. You get to know how to deal with people, negotiate with them, how to problem solve that sort of thing, which are invaluable if like us you want to go into the police" (Observation B1, p2/3).

Adopting a wider role orientation and capitalising on opportunities beyond visible patrol therefore enables individual PCSOs to engage in a wider variety of tasks that are more likely to maximise future applications to the force.

Despite some PCSOs adopting a more narrow orientation to the role due to feelings of frustration and disillusionment with its immediate benefits for progression, five out of twelve PCSOs tended to embrace a wider role definition and remit, taking the role beyond the provision of visible foot patrol, and becoming involved in additional duties relating to crime prevention and community engagement. These PCSOs were able to overcome limitations of the role and recognised the potential for reassurance policing as a useful training opportunity to support their ambitions to become police officers;

> "What are you supposed to do? Some of us see the role as being there to support the community, we'll come in on days off if there's an event going on or we'll rearrange things. Basically whatever we're doing we know our main priority is to help people feel safer....whereas there are others who only get going during the weekends when there's something exciting going on, basically when the kids are out because that's what they'll be doing if they get into the force" (PCSO Wilson, Observation B22, p5).

> "Yes, you mightn't get involved in the most exciting stuff as a PCSO but you are exposed to challenges and situations that test your ability to deal with confrontation, problem solve and what have you. And it's those kinds of things that you're going to have to do as a copper even if you do have more powers" (PCSO Preston, Observation A15, p6).

It therefore quickly became clear during observations which PCSOs were more committed to reassurance and community engagement aspects of the role and those who were not. Some PCSOs therefore approached the role as an opportunity for 'imitating' police officers, i.e. experiencing action and enforcement, whilst others approached the role as a means of developing wider policing skills to support future applications to become a police officer. Those with higher levels of commitment to the community

were more often than not eager to resume patrols, typically identified specific goals or routes at the beginning of each shift, whilst there was a sizeable proportion of PCSOs (1/4) whose commitment to the role had waned and who found the warmth of the station and the opportunity to escape the routines of (often undirected) foot patrol too inviting. It was such individuals who were more likely to engage in 'easing behaviour' (Cain, 1973, Chatterton, 1979) including shortcuts to demonstrate they had covered the beat area, taking extended breaks and undertaking personal errands whilst on duty, and leaving requests for service to their more enthusiastic colleagues.

That said, all twelve PCSOs, including Professional PCSOs who embraced community aspects of the role, were enthused by calls for service and the potential excitement derived from engaging in crime control activities when such opportunities were presented. Despite benevolent intentions, reassurance activities were inevitably suspended. The desire to contribute to crime control activities was also evident in efforts to support and therefore contribute to enforcement activities of sworn officers. Indeed for some PCSOs, commitment to the role and the desire to support sworn officers extended beyond working hours, as demonstrated by comments made by two PCSOs when on patrol and another during interview,

> I asked [PCSO Slater] if she was going to have enough time to do what she needed to do before the end of her shift, to which she glibly replied, "Probably not. But we [PCSO Slater and PCSO Carruthers] often work over depending upon what comes up. It sometimes makes it a long day, but it comes with the job and we're happy to get our teeth into something" (Observation A13, p7).

> "She [PCSO Carruthers] does get really worked up about things. I mean she'll even rings up on her days off to check that something has been done cos she panics in case things don't go as far as they could. She's frightened in case she leaves a stone unturned and the cops can't act on what's happened [in relation to enforcement of a specific incident]" (PCSO Spencer, Observation A27, p3).

> "I've spotted people off work and you can put off duty sightings in, you never really switch off in a sense. I don't deliberately look for people, but it someone passes and I notice them, it's a natural instinct that you can't help but play up. My partner will say '[Name], you're not at work!' and I'll be like, 'He's wanted, he's wanted!', and I'll contact [name of NPO] to let him know" (Interview with PCSO Sparks, p12).

Such statements suggests that PCSOs, despite being non-sworn members of the community and for a sizeable proportion having had aspirations to become a police officer blocked, actively construct identities as being part of the organisation and embrace the adage that a 'police officer is never off duty'. In an effort to support crime control efforts and satisfy aspirations to adopt the identity of a police officer, PCSOs become socialised into adopting a sense of mission (Westley, 1970, Cain, 1973, Holdaway, 1977, 1983, 1999, Chatterton, 1983, Smith and Gray, 1983, Reiner, 2000, Paoline, 2004) in their approach to the job. Sense of mission is characterised by an inflated sense of duty to protecting the moral order of society and is often associated with high levels of commitment to detecting and prosecuting offenders to the extent that the job transcends doing the job itself (Muir, 1977, Reiner, 2000). Pressure to adopt a sense of mission is particularly pronounced for some more ambitious PCSOs who are keen to feed into crime control activities and prove themselves to their police officer colleagues.

However, such dedication and the notion of 'never being off duty' can have the unintended consequence of individual PCSOs being unable to distance themselves from the job and the individuals with whom they come into contact. The importance of remaining unemotional and objective, as identified by Schein (1985) and Manning (1997), was identified by a number of PCSOs as an central aspect of becoming competent in the role;

> "When I finish I just switch off. I didn't take me long to realise you have to if you want to do the job. Even though we're not involved in some of the things officers see, you are exposed to victims of crime and the

like, so you've got to be detached from it. Some people cant and they get affected by it" (Interview with PCSO Preston, p4).

"Of course you're going to be affected [by the demands of police work] cos you're only human, but I make sure I separate my life from the job. When stuff happens I suppose it's like this front coming down. The last thing you want is to get too emotionally involved cos you wouldn't be doing your job properly" (Interview with PCSO Lowe, p8).

Crucially however, high levels of enthusiasm were also incompatible not only with the work ethic displayed by more disenchanted PCSOs, but with the physical demands of police work particularly conducting dedicated foot patrols, and ultimately the work ethic promulgated by the police culture. In consequence, even the most enthusiastic PCSOs tended to adapt their level of effort and enthusiasm for the role accordingly to better match that of others.

"When we first started we used to run around, nevermind walking, we were so eager to get stuck in and prove ourselves. You wouldn't believe how many jobs we used to do in an evening. We do about half now, partly because there's only a limited amount of things we can do and partly because it's difficult to sustain that pace for eight hours a day. You've got to adopt a slower pace, got to conserve your energy, you're keen as mustard at the beginning but you settle into things and learn when you need to step it up a gear and when you can relax a bit. Besides, it's alright if everyone is doing it but you're not gonna break your back if they're being lazy" (PCSO Sparks, Observation A23, p5).

"It's a lot more relaxed here, you know, you don't feel like you're gonna get shouted at to get out. Every sergeant is different, and [name] lets us get on and isn't on at us all of the time, whereas in other areas I know, they're [PCSOs] hardly in the station at all". At this point I'd been in the office for over an hour waiting for the PCSOs to go out on patrol as they sat and chatted with the NPOs. By the time we left it was almost 6pm without any protests from the NPOs as to

what the PCSOs were actually doing" (PCSO Fisher, Observation B8, p1).

Independent of individual orientations to the role, PCSOs need to strike a balance between the demands of patrol and police work, the orientations of their peers and their aspirations to become fully sworn officers. Ultimately therefore, motivation and commitment to the role is shaped by the parameters set by the work ethic of others in the neighbourhood team and the organisational police culture (Wilson, 1968, Young, 1991, Paoline, 2003). As PCSOs become socialised into the police culture, they, particularly those seeking to imitate police officers rather than perceiving the role as a means of gaining the skills of policing, increasingly match their commitment and orientation to the role with that displayed by their sworn officer colleagues. A more relaxed work ethic, as implied in the above observations, is particularly difficult for those PCSOs eager to become police officers as their aspirations clash with the orientations to work held by NPOs. Such tension has a negatively impact on their commitment to the role and intensifies their aspiration to become a police officer. Those PCSOs deployed within a proactive team with a strong work ethic are more likely to be given greater opportunities to develop their skills and become involved in crime control activities therefore reinforcing their motivation and commitment to the role.

Discussing the potential drivers and inhibitors upon levels of motivation, ambition and commitment raises questions with regards to the role played by the personal characteristics of the individual. The well known studies of Skolnick (1966) and Coleman and Gorman (1982) suggest that the police service attracts authoritarian and conservative personalities. Whilst not without their critics (Niederhoffer, 1967, Bayley and Mendolsohn, 1969), and despite being conducted prior to the introduction of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 and more recent efforts to diversify the police service (Loftus, 2008), a number of PCSOs identified authoritative personalities amongst both police officer and Special Constable colleagues. A number of PCSOs identified a demonstrated by their endorsement of the

authority in the role and their willingness to use enforcement when confronting crime and conflict;

> PCSO Jameson – “I mean I can’t really understand why you would want to do it without getting paid. It’s not exactly a glamorous job is it?
>
> FC – So why do you think people are attracted to being a Special then?
>
> PCSO Preston – “Well, I reckon it’s all about being an authority figure and having power. You’ve got to have some sort of ruthless streak to be a copper and maybe they’re not getting that from their regular jobs” (Observation A8, p3).

> “They’re all [young people] on edge tonight. You can tell how their tone’s changed can’t you?...It’s cos [name of NPO] has been holding no punches with them and a few of them got nicked last week. He was telling me that he’d had enough of their crap and wanted to put them in their place. I think they’d [neighbourhood police officers] get them all on ASBOs if they could” (PCSO Slater, Observation A20, p2).

> “The first weeks at the station were a real culture shock for me. I got a real surprise how confident to the point of aggression people [police officers] are, how distrusting they are and how things just don’t bother them...Last week the PCSOs saw the death of a drug user when he’d OD’d. I saw the man four hours before so it really shocked me as well as they talked as if it were a normal part of everyday life...I think that’s something that you have to adapt to in your personality when you do this job even if it’s not there naturally” (Interview with PCSO Spencer, p1).

These examples not only demonstrate the inevitable authority inherent within the office of constable but suggest that police officers need to adapt their individual personality, for example into being emotionally resilient and cynical, in order to cope with the demands of the job. Research suggests

such attributes are valued characteristics within police work and endorsed within the police culture (Van Maanen, 1977, Holdaway, 1988, Chan et al, 2003). PCSOs learn that they need to personify such characteristics to cope with the demands of operational police work and become integrated into neighbourhood teams even if they are not naturally present in their individual personalities. Whilst authoritarian traits were not displayed by the majority of PCSOs engaged in this study PCSOs learn from their observations of police officers that being resilient and having an ability to use authority to the point of aggression, are an essential part of being a police officer and therefore are cultural characteristics that they will need to endorse in order to pursue their ambitions.

Stronger evidence can be identified with regards to conservatism (Skolnick, 1966, Coleman and Gorman, 1982, Waddington, 1999). It was clear from conversations between PCSOs and with police officer colleagues that PCSOs were all too aware of disparities between their own values and personal histories and those of individuals within target communities. Whilst those individual PCSOs who embraced a wider role definition to include reassurance and engagement tended to be to empathetic towards the deprivation experienced by those within target communities in explanation for their subsequent offending, the majority of PCSOs were less sympathetic, less tolerant of their behaviour and were more likely to construct an 'us and them' attitude to the public.

> "I knew it [the job] was going to be different to what I was used to, people living in different circumstances and having different opportunities than how I'd been brought up, but the people you encounter on a day-to-day basis and the people the NPOs feedback to us beggars belief. You tend to think that everyone's got the same values as you do. I mean my background I would say was very fortunate. I was brought up in a secure family, to be respectful of authority and other people, to work hard. It's a world apart from what it's like here" (PCSO Fisher, Observation B16, p3).

> “I know a lot of them haven’t had a very good start in life but that’s no excuse. When you ask them what they want to do all they can say is drink. They’re not interested in anything else...You do feel sorry for them when the house is in a state and their parents are drunks, but these little shits [persistent offenders] have everything and play on the fact that their parents can’t discipline them. There’s no point in trying to get something off the ground for them, they’d probably just trash it” (PCSO Preston, Observation A15, p4).

However, whilst such attitudes and characteristics may be encouraged by cumulative experience in police work, individuals do bring personal skills and qualities to the role. Fielding (1988) and Chan (1997, 2003) clearly pay testimony in their studies of police socialisation and culture to the strength of the individual in shaping policing styles, developing competence, and in rejecting or affirming the accepted culture. Whilst the role of a PCSO is differentiated from that of a police officer, PCSO Slater and PCSO Wilson clearly identify the benefits of having a personality or individual characteristics that corresponded to the demands of police work;

> “The day I called them to tell them I’d applied they weren’t shocked or concerned, they just said, “it’s perfect for you”. Basically, they thought I had the right personality to do the job. That said, when I was young I was a real rebel so they thought it was dead funny that I should now want to do this, you know they could imagine me going up to all the kids and saying I know what’s it’s like and all that to get them to behave” (PCSO Slater, Observation, A3, p2).

> “The whole job as a PCSO depends a lot on personality. Yeah, I enjoy my job, but there are probably lots of people who would absolutely hate it, so it all depends on your outlook, you know, whether you’re a confident person, whether you like a challenge and can deal with obstacles” (Interview with PCSO Wilson, p18).

Despite the absence of authoritarian traits amongst PCSOs, PCSOs aligned themselves with police officers rather than the community. In order to reinforce their membership within the organisation, gain respect from police officer colleagues and secure value from their work, PCSOs felt under pressure to 'prove themselves'. This was invariably a by-product of differentiation of roles between sworn officers and PCSOs and the unproven effectiveness of PCSOs. This pressure to prove themselves however performed the positive function of sustaining motivation of PCSOs despite limited opportunities afforded by the role;

> "I'm motivated because I'm always thinking that I've got to prove myself to the cops to make sure that they know that you're doing something and value you being part of the team...It always helps if we can offer something to them at the end of the day...You do stuff and you get a pat on the back, get praise for it and you just try and help out more and more cos that's what it's all about, that's why we're here" (Interview with PCSO Preston, p15).

> "You know you're limited in what you can do and what impact you can make, but at the same time there have been situations where I've seen us take something back [intelligence] and for it shed light on something bigger going on and it's those kinds of things that keep you motivated and show to them how valuable you can be" (PCSO Sparks, Observation A24, p2).

Achieving a sense of value and therefore acceptance by regular officers was therefore determined by their ability to identify suspects and support arrests since these activities are more likely to contribute towards performance indicators and objective outputs (Punch, 1979, Greene, 2000). Conversely, activities within the remit of the PCSO, such as reassurance or crime prevention, are contrary to notions of 'real police work' (Skolnick, 1966, Van Maanen, 1977, Reiner, 2000) endorsed within the traditional police culture. Reassurance and crime prevention were subsequently not prioritised or rewarded by fully sworn officers, as demonstrated by PCSO Lowe during interview,

> “I tell you when we’re most valued is when we help them get an arrest...I mean, their obsession is to get a log closed then you can move onto something else and the figures look good” (Interview with PCSO Lowe, p28).

Whilst the majority of PCSOs aligned themselves to these values, the lack of primacy afforded to community engagement and reassurance within police attitudes to police work was a source of frustration for one PCSOs whose motivation and job satisfaction stemmed from the desire to reassure and support vulnerable members of the community. PCSO Spencer explained the reaction of his Sergeant to his success in securing an arrest for theft and handling stolen goods,

> “Somebody was saying that the Sergeant was doing cartwheels and that’s because catching that type of crime and that type of person is ideal for them. But for me personally, over the long term, catching one person on that particular day for one crime is not particularly important...What I find my biggest achievements have been is working with other agencies on certain projects to try and make a difference to people’s lives” (Interview with PCSO Spencer, p20).

With the exception of PCSO Spencer, the pull of the performance culture of the station, coupled with the desire to feel accepted within the organisation, exerts a powerful influence upon feelings of motivation and commitment to the role. Driven by a desire to be accepted by other officers, PCSOs must abandon their individual values and notions of ‘making a difference’ and adopt the cultural values held by police officers (Van Maanen, 1976).

In assimilating themselves with the dominant culture, PCSOs begin to understand that in order to secure their identity as members of the police organisation they need to impress upon regular police officers their ability to both overcome the limitations presented by the role and to support crime control objectives promoted within the organisational culture. However, not all PCSOs were able to overcome such limitations and remain motivated, resulting in feelings of boredom, disenchantment with the role and cynicism regarding their contribution to police objectives. Such feelings of frustration

mirrors typologies of police officer orientations to work as seen in Reiner's, (1978) 'uniform carrier' or Muir's (1977) 'avoider'. Frustration regarding a lack of variation within the PCSO role is further exacerbated by restrictions upon career progression that commonly prevent PCSOs from viewing the PCSO role as a career, as demonstrated by the following statements from PCSO Sparks and PCSO Fisher;

> "I can't see myself doing this for much longer. If something else was to come into place, not a senior PCSO, but somewhere to go...cos if you're in admin you can go from being an admin assistant, to a supervisor or what have you, and the pay goes up with it, whereas this role, you're kind of stuck. Whereas if they had a ladder type role where you start as a PCSO but could branch out into other things, like youth police work or helping with intelligence and ASBOs then fair enough, but there's nothing" (Interview with PCSO Sparks, p32).

> "It can be disheartening especially when you really want to get in to the force and the role prevents you from doing what you'd like and when you're restricted in where you can go [in terms of progression within the force]...what happens is that people get so frustrated....they lose the motivation they had when they first came in" (PCSO Fisher, Observation B21, p4).

Section 2 – Socialisation, Support and Communication

The previous section suggests that PCSO motivation and commitment to the role is driven by their ambitions to become police officers rather than their allegiance to the role itself. In reaction to their failure to fulfil their ambitions to become police officers and the limited capacity of the PCSO role to feed into crime control activities of the organisation, PCSOs seek legitimacy and value through their shared experience with sworn officers and by developing craft knowledge and competence. This section will examine the skills, attributes and expertise needed to demonstrate competence within

the role. The discussion will begin by exploring the value of the training programme received by PCSOs prior to deployment in preparation for the role, will then go on to explore support provided by more experienced PCSOs in encouraging the development of craft skills, before finally examining the personal characteristics and abilities that PCSOs must develop in order to perform within their role.

Reflecting research findings of Van Maanen (1973), Bayley and Bittner (1984) and Fielding (1988) in their studies involving police officers, PCSOs did not perceive the induction training programme as instructive to practice. Instead it was conceived as a means of introducing them to the organisation and providing basic guidance of the technical and enforcement aspects of their role, for example, intelligence gathering, the use of police radios and confiscating alcohol. PCSOs unequivocally agreed that guidance relating to the demands of community engagement and the provision of reassurance was notably absent from their induction training programme. As PCSO Wilson suggests;

> "To be honest I don't think the training really prepares you for the job at all! I mean there's nothing much at all that I'd done in training that I've actually put into practice on the job" (Interview with PCSO Wilson, p8).

As identified by a wealth of research into training programmes for probationer constables (Chatterton, 1977, Hopper, 1977, Chan, 1996, 1999), classroom training does not provide insight for PCSOs in the realities of police work. It does however perform an instrumental role in socialising PCSOs into the culture of the organisation and introducing them to formal rules and expectations as a member of the police service. The notion of classroom training as a rite of passage (Van Maanen, 1973) was indisputably endorsed by all PCSOs, as explained by PCSO Jameson;

> "The training just doesn't prepare you for what it's like out on the streets, but you need to do your diversity, health and safety and what have you. It's like if you're doing role-plays with your fellow PCSOs [in simulating interaction] they don't know what it's like to be someone

> who's refusing their alcohol being taken, they're just going on what they imagine young people to be like. It doesn't prepare you for what you might actually face. I mean the PCSO who came to speak to the group basically said, 'All of this that you're taught in training, it's nowt like that when you're out on the street. Your real training starts on your first day wherever you're posted. This is just a pile of rubbish you have to go through" (Interview with PCSO Jameson, p4).

Beyond frustrations with the training, PCSOs equally recognised the complexities of their role and the restrictions of classroom training to illustrate the types of activities in which they can expect to encounter on patrol. As suggested by Van Maanen (1973) and Manning (1978, 1995), learning the nature and demands of police work can only be secured by 'doing' and observing others. PCSOs noted that in order to gain the most from their training, they needed to proactively interpret and reflect upon lessons learnt in line with their practical experience (1988). However, contrary to the training of police probationers, trainers have no precedence from which to draw upon to ensure training corresponds with PCSO experience. As such, there will always be a disjuncture between training and the realities of the role when not delivered by those with such common experience. This was articulated by PCSO Elliot when discussing guidance and feedback on performance received from senior officers;

> "There's nobody in a higher position who can really show you cos they haven't done it....The trouble is all decisions about the job and training for the job are done by senior officers. I mean how can they decide about the job when they don't know what the job's like. They're only going with what's been tried and tested by constables, but we're a completely different kettle of fish" (PCSO Elliot, Observation B4, p4).

The limited role played by the formal training process therefore leads to PCSOs, like their police officer counterparts (Van Maanen, 1973 and Manning, 1978, 1995), to become competent and learn their own craft through observing their more experienced peers and decision making of the NPOs with whom they work.

Indeed, research relating to police socialisation (Van Maanen, 1973, Fielding, 1989) suggests that the accumulation of cultural knowledge and learning of the 'police craft' is dependent upon experience and the observation of peers. In both case study areas, neighbourhood policing teams endorsed a policy of mentoring between newly appointed and experienced PCSOs, equating to three pairs of PCSOs in each area working as a mentor and mentee. This support was highly valued by more inexperienced PCSOs, such as PCSO Slater and PCSO Fisher, who gained reassurance and confidence in being partnered with a more experienced PCSO from whom they could learn organisational expectations, procedures and cultural values of the organisation.

> "I mean [name of PCSO] has been here for over two years and she knows everybody, all the faces, teenagers now from when they were younger, whereas I came in and I'm putting myself in situations that I'd never dream of being in...but now I've noticed with actually having this [the interview] like how I've come on and I think I've come on leaps and bounds from a few months ago. By working with her I feel more confident, I know who people are, who they associate with, how best to handle them and that gives you a huge head start" (Interview with PCSO Slater, p8).

> "I suppose it's like driving. You're given the basics, know the theory when you start but you only get better at it and through the different situations you find yourself in with your colleagues…learning from each other and getting results as a team" (Interview with PCSO Fisher, p1).

As reported by Shearing and Ericson (1999) such sharing of occupational and cultural knowledge amongst police officers typically involves the telling of past events in order to socialise the less experienced officer into the cultural values of the organisation. Amongst PCSOs this ranged from humorous stories whereby officers had 'maintained the edge' over suspects (Van Maanen 1978) to situations whereby PCSOs had been injured as a result of bad judgement when reprimanding young people.

When working to alleviate the workload and pressures placed upon police constables by attending to incidents of lower level disorder and anti-social behaviour, there is the potential for PCSOs to be confronted by situations that fall beyond their remit and capabilities and/or situations that present a heightened level of risk. Both observations and focus groups with NPO officers across both case study areas highlight the importance of PCSOs developing 'good judgement'; that is, knowing when it is necessary to enlist the support of NPOs when confronted with incidents falling beyond their remit and/or when the level of threat posed by a situation cannot be resolved through persuasion, negotiation and communication, (Fielding, 1984). Thus for a number of NPOs, judgement was a central sign of competence only secured through experience;

> "When they started a few of them got in a few sticky situations where they'd call us up for the least thing, but as they've learnt what they can do within the role and that there's more ways to skin a cat, they only contact us when it's necessary. And the original ones who've developed that pass that judgement down to the newer ones" (NPO, Focus Group A).

Indeed, as suggested in the above quote and supported by Crawford et al (2004), a number of PCSOs when operating with limited experience were less able to make such judgements serving to increase, rather than decrease, the workload of sworn officers. However, with experience, PCSOs learn how to utilise their discretion and develop the necessary insight,

> "In the early days they were creating more problems than they were solving as they were coming to you for the least thing. Now that's changed as they've become experienced and know their options [in decision making] so when they call us we know there's a good reason" (NPO, Focus Group B).

To a certain degree, the PCSO mentor fulfils the role of the field training officer as depicted within the third phase of Van Maanen's (1973) socialisation process. The mentee learns to develop good judgement and 'what to do' and 'what not to do' (Manning, 1977) through a process of watching, listening and mimicking their more experienced partner. Through working collaboratively, the mentee is encouraged to judge individual incidents by their own merit (Shearing and Ericson, 1999) rather than in accordance with formal rules such as its legality, relationship to policy or previous handling by the police.

A crucial benefit therefore within mentoring arrangements between PCSOs is that the PCSO mentor, in drawing upon their detailed local knowledge, is able to introduce the inexperienced PCSO to contacts developed within local communities, both law abiding and non law abiding, and to suggest effective means of engagement in order to maximise police-community relations and gain intelligence. This was demonstrated in a conversation with PCSO Slater and PCSO Carruthers in reflecting upon the approach taken by PCSO Carruthers during a visit to a parent to redress their child's anti-social behaviour;

> PCSO Slater – "I thought I should leave [name of experienced PCSO] to it because I haven't met her before and she has this rapport with them that I haven't yet got"
> FC – "Maybe so, but I think you really helped asking about potential apprenticeships and suggesting she speaks to the school that by the end they were directing what they wanted to say to both of you"
> PCSO Carruthers – Aye definitely. She can be a bit temperamental but I've known them for a while so she's usually ok… You'll have her on your side from now on" (Observation A10, p3).

Operating within such a partnership less experienced PCSOs are not only thus able to learn the 'craft' of public engagement, intelligence gathering and cultural sensibilities at a faster pace than otherwise if paired with another PCSO of equal experience, but they are less likely to make mistakes or

jeopardise presentational strategies utilised by the organisation to reinforce legitimacy and control, (Manning, 1997). Indeed, PCSOs Carruthers and Slater often utilised shared coded words whilst on patrol to convey their suspicions regarding the identity of suspected individuals;

> PCSO Carruthers spotted a man sitting on a wall and decided to approach him to conduct a stop. The man was civil and provided his details without question. Whilst PCSO Carruthers was completing the stop form with him, PCSO Slater asked, "Did she say a cat?" referring to something said on the radio which neither myself nor the man being stopped could hear. PCSO Carruthers replied, 'No, it was a black hat from a description'. Nothing more was said and they completed the stop. As soon as the PCSOs parted company with the man, PCSO Carruthers said, "We'd better call the room [control] for a front page description to see if his name checks out with his appearance"….I asked the PCSOs about the confusion on the radio. Both PCSOs laughed and explained that it is a code they use to let each other know when to probe a person for further information when either suspects them as being known to the police" (Observation A7, p4).

PCSOs also quickly learn the importance of balancing operational demands with the maintenance of community relations. Like police officers, PCSOs learn to use their discretion when dealing with anti-social behaviours such as noise and/or on street drinking (Bittner, 1967, Wilson, 1968) in order to facilitate compliance, as demonstrated by PCSO Jameson;

> "You need to learn to exercise a degree of tolerance otherwise they're [young people] aren't going to work with you. Yes, that might go against the official message of zero tolerance but if you don't they're [young people] not going to respect you and aren't going to know when you mean business" (Observation A17, p5).

However, unlike the observations of Manning (1997) and Holdaway (1979) whose research only relates to fully sworn officers, PCSOs are often

constrained to act due to their restricted power of enforcement undermining their legitimacy and the compliance of those they seek to control.

Whilst all PCSOs understood the importance of confidence and autonomy, a number reported pressure from the organisation to become competent and effective at an early stage in their socialisation. Those who demonstrate enthusiasm and initiative become marked in the minds of police officer colleagues as conducting 'good police work' and efforts are more likely to become integrated into the police culture and achieve an identity closest to that of a police officer. In articulating what makes a good PCSO, one NPO explained;

> "They've got to be organised, be enthusiastic, self-generating and use their initiative otherwise they're just a pair of legs" (NPO, Focus Group A).

However, recruits did not always have the confidence to engage in certain behaviours, particularly those involving enforcement, at an early stage of their development. Reflecting the work of Fielding (1988) and his emphasis upon the reflective role played by the individual within the socialisation process, PCSO decision making and approach was influenced by both past work experiences and their individual personalities. As one PCSO Spencer explained whilst on patrol,

> "Confidence is something that's just taken for granted in this role. But most people haven't been in this situation before and people are constantly getting their backs up. I mean I prefer to give people the benefit of the doubt but to them [supervisory officers] they just see me not putting in the [stop] forms… I mean they expect you to pick everything up straightaway but you need time to get used to it and see what approach you're most comfortable with" (PCSO Spencer, Observation, A4, p2).

Contrary to the power differential that exists between field training officers and probationer constables, the PCSO mentor and mentee are of equal status within the organisation only differentiated by an imbalance of cumulative experience. PCSOs learn from the values, past histories and skills of their partner PCSO as part of a continual socialisation process (Van Maanen and Manning, 1978, Fielding, 1988, Chan et al, 2003). Indeed, the majority of the more experienced PCSOs expressed a willingness to share decisions and explore ideas with their less experienced peers in order to achieve the most beneficial outcome when confronted with a problem or potential situation of conflict. It was not therefore unusual for more experienced PCSOs, such as PCSO Elliot below, to discuss options and potential consequences for action with their less experienced colleagues.

> "If I'm working with someone who hasn't been in the job for as long as me and they've got a great idea then I'll listen. What might be right in one situation in the past might not be at a different time so there's things I won't have thought of that might work well" (Interview with PCSO Elliot, p5).

Within some partnerships those less experienced PCSOs embraced the role definition of their PCSO mentors, following their lead in becoming involved in more proactive work, such as crime prevention, engagement with local schools and neighbourhood watch. Conversely however, there were also cases where more experienced PCSOs dominated decision making. Whilst this shows confidence and absorption into the role from the more experienced PCSO, it also has the negative impact of undermining the development of craft skills of the recruit, potentially leading to frustration and disconnection from the role.

As previously identified by Chan (1996) in her discussion of 'good police work', and by Crawford (2004) with regards to PCSO powers and capabilities, the ability to 'use your mouth' was universally perceived by both PCSOs and NPOs as an essential characteristic of a 'good PCSO'. Unlike police officers who are able to perform based on knowledge of procedure and the law, PCSOs need to be able to communicate and engage with

members of the public in every activity they are likely to become involved irrespective of the level of consent or deference they receive. Such qualities however cannot be learnt in the same way as procedural rules and practices, but are dependent on the interpersonal skills and the personality of the individual. Certainly, the ability to approach and communicate with others was not an innate quality shared by all PCSOs as PCSO Fisher explains;

> "You need to be a good communicator for this job. It's not my strongest quality but I've worked on it and I'm getting better. It's difficult to walk up to somebody and try and get them to do what you ask...I'm not the most confident person...Having to be pushed into it has taken some getting used to" (Interview with PCSO Fisher, p1).

However, for the more experienced PCSOs, their ability to communicate with different types of people, from victims of crime to community activists to young offenders, was evident. As suggested in previous PCSO research (Crawford et al, 2004, Cooper et al, 2006, Johnston, 2007), and by Bittner (1967) and Muir (1977) in discussions regarding the police officer as peacekeeper, the ability to persuade and negotiate with individuals is an essential skill for PCSOs since they are unable to resort to enforcement to encourage compliance, as PCSO Sparks explains;

> "You learn to have very persuasive social skills as that's all you've got, whereas a cop uses the law as a first step rather than going in lower and seeing if you get there" (PCSO Sparks, Observation A19, p10).

PCSOs in possession of the power of detention (Crawford, 2004, Singer, 2004) may legitimately request individuals to remain with them until the arrival of a constable. However, PCSOs engaged in this study simply sidestepped the lack of formal powers and typically used their communication skills to keep unsuspecting individuals talking until the arrival of a NPO. There were times when the individual concerned became wise to PCSO efforts whereupon PCSOs were no longer able to control the situation, but the necessity of employing such a tactic clearly demonstrates the need for PCSOs to develop their own 'dictionary knowledge' (Chan, 1997) in order to be effective.

Reflecting Chan's (1996) categorisation of 'good police work', the ability to communicate effectively with different individuals and scenarios to avoid the escalation of conflict was also dependent on their ability to empathise with others and be sensitive to the situations in which they are involved. This was demonstrated during a conversation with PCSO Slater in relation to youth disorder;

> "A lot of these kids don't have anyone to look after them so it's hardly surprising when they get into trouble. It's funny when you pay visits to their parents though. I know they're going to react, they probably feel like they themselves are being judged, so I always try and put myself in that situation when I need to talk to them about what their son or daughter has been up to" (PCSO Slater, Observation A13, p6).

The ability to communicate when tension is high (Chan et al, 2003), especially when dealing with intoxicated individuals however, was not possessed by all PCSOs. Those without such capabilities tended to react impatiently, even aggressively, causing conflict to escalate, as demonstrated in the following neighbourhood dispute involving PCSO Preston and PCSO Jameson;

> PCSO Preston approached the woman first as she continued to shout and swear at them. When she failed to respond to PCSO Preston's requests for her to listen to what he had to say, PCSO Preston increased the volume of his voice and battled to be heard. Frustrated, PCSO Preston said to PCSO Jameson 'I give up. You try and get some sense out of her'. PCSO Jameson adopted a different approach...kneeling down to where the woman was sitting and asking her to explain the events leading up to the dispute. PCSO Jameson listened intently, and the woman, although remaining upset, stopped shouting and became calmer. By relating her behaviour to the welfare of her children and being empathetic to her situation, PCSO Jameson managed to calm her down and restore order" (Observation A8, p7).

The ability of PCSOs to adapt their communication style depending upon the audience and the demands of individual situations (Muir, 1977) was therefore deemed an essential measure of competency.

The ability to communicate was also essential in upholding presentational strategies of the organisation and in maintaining public legitimacy. Police officers are required to act in a professional, sensitive manner with the public in order to protect their professional mandate to control (Manning, 1978, 1995, Lyons, 1999). Whilst lacking in the same coercive powers, this responsibility equally applies to PCSOs since they are more likely to come into contact with law abiding members of the public as representatives of the police service. The importance of achieving a dialogue with residents and feeding back information to citizens was identified by NPOs as an important mechanism towards improving confidence and was clearly understood by PCSOs as good practice.

> "People need to be told what's going on. I mean it's a hard thing cos cops are busy, but getting the public onside is all about keeping people updated, because if you've done something good, go back to them and take the credit for what you've done, or at least say to people, I haven't been able to get that sorted yet, but I want to keep you updated" (Interview with PCSO Carruthers, p18).

Fielding (1984) and Manning (1995) both document the use of 'presentational strategies' by police officers during public interaction as a means of placation, control and to satisfy public expectations. Findings suggest that PCSOs also endorse similar presentational techniques to facilitate authority and legitimacy, for example, by promoting successes within their neighbourhood policing team and by making claims to greater experience and competence. In relation to the latter, both PCSOs Slater and Jameson sought to conceal their inexperience in the role by informing the public, particularly young people, that they had been transferred from another force or had been working in another part of the city in order to demonstrate a higher level of competence. Such presentational strategies

were also utilised when dealing with public complaints or concerns as a means of appeasement. Offering support for Bittner's (1967) portrayal of police officers as 'competent social actors" and Muir's (1977) analogy of police officers as 'street corner politicians', PCSO Elliot explains the tendency to draw upon pre-prepared responses when managing complaints and/or concerns from the public;

> "You do tend to have a certain bank of responses as you hear the same things over and again. You know, complaints about kids, us not responding fast enough…you do often have to have responses ready so you're not caught off guard and left looking incompetent. It also makes you look like you know what you're talking about, even if sometimes you don't…In a way it's a bit like being a politician, but one who tells the truth", (PCSO Elliot, Observation B8, p2).

Section 3 – PCSOs and the Police Occupational Culture

The previous section discussed the efforts made by PCSOs in managing the limitations of their role and becoming competent members of the police organisation. Like fully sworn officers, PCSO learn the realities and necessary skills of policing via experience and in observing each other rather than through the formal training process. As PCSOs develop experience of police work, they become socialised into the organisation and its culture. Under pressure to prove their worth to police officer colleagues, it is those PCSOs who are able to develop good judgement in assessing risk, master communication skills of persuasion and negotiation and uphold professionalism in their dealings with the public who are more likely to be integrated into neighbourhood policing teams. However, in order to receive greater acceptance and respect from police officer colleagues, PCSOs not only learn that they need to develop essential craft skills and become competent within the role, but they learn to adapt to the lack of authority within the role by aligning themselves with police officers and their occupational culture.

This section explores the ways in which PCSOs have attempted to align themselves with the traditional characteristics of the police culture in order to promote integration and foster a greater sense of value from their role.

Whilst PCSOs endorsed cultural characteristics to varying degrees, observational and interview data demonstrated adherence to the six characteristics typically associated with the traditional police culture; suspicion (Skolnick, 1966, Rubenstein, 1973, Skolnick and Fyfe, 1994), solidarity (Manning 1995, Paoline, 2003), an 'us and them' attitude to the public and those with whom they came into contact (Van Maanen, 1974, Muir, 1977, Smith and Gray, 1986), machismo and a sense of competition (Holdaway, 1983, Young, 1991, Heidensohn, 1992, Fielding, 1994, Westmarland, 2001), a sense of mission and love of action (Westley, 1970, Holdaway, 1977, Chatterton, 1983, Reiner, 2000) and, for those PCSOs less able to adapt to the limited authority and legitimacy of the role, and a sense of cynicism (Skolnick, 1966, Niederhoffer, 1967, Cain, 1973,Van Maanen, 1974, 1978, Reiner, 2000). PCSO adherence to each of these six characteristics will subsequently be explored.

The wealth of police cultural studies draw attention to the functional benefits of suspicion (Skolnick, 1966, Rubenstein, 1973, Skolnick and Fyfe, 1994) and solidarity (Manning 1995, Paoline, 2003) as means of coping with the demands of police work. Simply in engaging with police work and sharing an occupational remit with fully sworn officers, PCSOs must also become attentive despite their non-confrontational role and limited authority to suspicious activity and the threat of violence within situations they face. Like police officers, PCSOs also become suspicious and distrustful of the public (Skolnick, 1966 and Rubenstein, 1973), particularly young people, those who have had previous dealings with the police, and individuals who question their legitimacy.

> "You don't know who you're dealing with so you've got to treat everyone with caution on the one hand and a bit of suspicion on the

other as you don't know who you can trust" (PCSO Spencer, Observation A12, p5).

We arrived at the local shops and noticed a group of teenage girls congregating outside the newsagents. The PCSOs were immediately suspicious.
PCSO Jameson – "They'll be asking people to go into the shop to get them cigarettes or over the road for some drink. We'll just stand here to keep an eye on them".
After standing there for a few minutes, a boy, aged around 10 years of age, approached PCSO Preston and said that he had found a samurai sword on the lawn outside the neighbour's back door. PCSO Preston asked the boy to lead us to his home to collect it...As we walked away PCSO Preston asked, "You're not wasting our time are you [name of boy]? Moving us away from the shop so your friends can get drunk?" (Observation A15, p4).

"The more experienced you become the more you develop a sense of when things just don't smell right. You'll find that most of the time your instincts are right and something fishy is going on" (PCSO Brooks, Observation B4, p2).

Having the correct 'instincts' for suspicious activity was highlighted by neighbourhood police officers within focus group discussions as an indicator of competence. Whilst officers recognised that an 'instinct' for suspicion was dependent upon experience and was part of developing good judgement, they clearly identified those PCSOs within their neighbourhood teams who were better able to use such 'instincts' to get results.

NPO – There are certain PCSOs that we have here who, if they say they suspect something going on then I'll be more inclined to react, and I think they [those individual PCSOs] know that. Purely because I know that they only contact us when there's good reason and have

made that extra effort to get to know the lay of the land so they know if something's afoot" (NPO, Focus Group 2).

Suspicion is therefore deemed an essential skill for PCSOs not only as a means of protection and as a means of detecting rule-breaking and feeding into the performance culture, but is clearly communicated by sworn officers as an essential attribute to police work. Therefore, PCSOs who endorse this cultural characteristic and develop local knowledge in a similar way to that identified by Bittner (1967) are more likely to be granted legitimacy from their sworn officer colleagues than those who don't.

In addition to danger and the prospect of hostility from an ever demanding public, their shared experiences with fully sworn officers enable them to have an appreciation of the inherent challenges in police work and the prosecution of offenders that is not held by individuals outside of the organisation. PCSOs were in widespread agreement that they could rely on their neighbourhood police officer counterparts for support should they find themselves at risk, but this sense of loyalty and solidarity did not always extend to fully sworn reactive officers. As shown by Reuss-Ianni (1983) in illustrating the divided loyalties between street cops and management cops, PCSOs do not share solidarity with police officers outside of their neighbourhood teams due to their differential remit and their limited capacity to engage in 'real' police work (see Chapter 7).

Rather, PCSOs are comparatively more loyal to the neighbourhood policing team from which they are drawn. As suggested by Skolnick (1966), Reiner, (2000) and Paoline (2003) amongst others, it is essential for those involved in police work to be able to rely on their colleagues due to the danger and threat inherent in the role. Whilst PCSOs may not be exposed to the same level of threat and violence as fully sworn officers, they are not only dependent upon neighbourhood police officers to respond to their calls for assistance when placed at risk but they also need to rely upon officers to respond to calls for service that extend beyond their capabilities and to maintain order.

Nonetheless, solidarity between PCSOs and NPOs is also differentiated within neighbourhood policing teams. PCSOs tended to express a heightened sense of loyalty and allegiance to those neighbourhood officers whom they shared the same shift pattern and geographic areas of responsibility. There was a clear sense during interviews that PCSOs felt a greater sense of solidarity with neighbourhood officers whom they had greater contact. As explained by PCSO Jameson, allocating PCSOs and NPOs to smaller, discrete areas of responsibility can create divisions within the wider neighbourhood policing team;

> PCSO Jameson- "It's definitely a case of having a team within a team. I can have banter within the [officers who operate within the same area of responsibility], but I don't know how to talk to the others.
>
> FC – Do you feel you have a better relationship with those officers then?
>
> PCSO – Yes for the simple fact that I work more closely with them...you're fine with the team you're in who you see nearly every day whereas with the other teams, there's not such an aspect of a team (Interview with PCSO Jameson, p24/25).

In-group solidarity between PCSOs and NPOs also serves to isolate PCSOs from local communities. Their shared sense of danger and membership within the organisation leads to an 'us versus them' attitude towards between PCSOs and the public, as PCSOs set themselves apart from local communities due to feelings of distrust, a perceived lack of support for the police and perceptions of widespread criminality therein. Whilst attitudes towards the public will be shaped by experience, they are collectively communicated by police officers and, due to PCSOs' desire for integration within the organisation, can negatively impact upon PCSO perceptions of the community, as the following observations suggest;

> One of the NPOs approached us as we continued to keep watch for signs of anyone suspicious hanging around the parked vehicles. After

> greeting PCSO Preston and myself, he remarked, 'What a hell-hole this is!'. PCSO Preston remarked, 'Ah, it's alright when the sun shines'. The NPO replied, "That's right, forever the optimist eh? Watching all the SRNs [police targets] hanging around outside the [name of employment centre]?" PCSO Preston joined in. "That's true. It's a shame they don't have their numbers in neon above their heads – they'd be easier to chase. Saying that they all look the same so it's not too hard!" (Observation, A17, p3).
>
> Looking towards the sky showing black clouds and imminent rain, PCSO Sparks said, 'See, you can see [name of area] straightaway...just look for the black clouds hanging over'. Then, suddenly self-conscious, PCSO Sparks tried to qualify her remark urging, "It's not like everyone who lives in [name of area] is always up to no good. I would say maybe a quarter of them are genuine law abiding people but three quarters aren't. They hate us here" (Observation A11, p2).
>
> PCSO Lowe informed me that some neighbourhood officers were tied up conducting some drug raids in [name of area]. He went on to explain, "It might be for possession, but saying that, that would mean they'd have to bash through most of the doors round here, its abnormal if you're not, so there must be more to it than that" (Observation B16, p2).

In developing an allegiance with NPOs, PCSOs also adopt the same classifications and labels used by NPOs, such as 'scumbags', scrotes, or 'little shites' (Van Maanen, 1974, Smith and Gray, 1986, Young 1991), to refer to specific individuals and/or groups with whom they come into contact. Endorsement of such labels not only demonstrates acknowledgement of their shared experience, but supports isolation (Skolnick, 1966). As suggested in the wealth of policing literature (Van Maanen 1974, Chan, 1997, Waddington, 1999) it is the experience of conducting police work and the

inevitable hostility that accompanies policing communities of conflict that leads to PCSOs to differentiating themselves from the public.

However, whilst labelling case study areas as 'criminal' is not unreasonable given the rates of crime and disorder within both case study areas, such perceptions alienate PCSOs from target communities and act as barriers to community engagement and reassurance. It would appear therefore that it is not only pressure from the performance culture that undermines reassurance, but PCSOs also experience pressure from within the occupational culture to distance themselves from local communities. Nonetheless, contrary to assertions of Skolnick (1966) and Rubenstein (1973) in relation to alienation between police officers and the public, PCSOs share greater interdependence with local communities than police officers. As demonstrated by PCSO Clark and PCSO Wilson below, PCSOs cannot isolate themselves completely from members of the public as they are dependent upon intelligence gathering from the public in order to contribute to organisational crime control objectives;

> "We have to be careful not to exclude everyone cos we're dependent on some of them for information and the lower level intelligence that helps us get results" (Interview with PCSO Clark, p11).

> "There are residents who keep reporting stuff are committed to improving things round here so our best shot is trying to build bridges with them to bring more back [to the station]. After all, they're here all of them time and see what's going on" (PCSO Wilson, Observation B11, p1).

PCSOs cannot therefore afford to exclude themselves completely from the communities they police since they are ultimately dependent on reciprocal relations to support NPOs and therefore to encourage their integration into the organisation.

Securing respect and a sense of value from police officers is however also dependent on the ability of PCSOs to adhere to the hegemonic masculinity inherent within police work (Skolnick, 1966, Fielding, 1994, Heidensohn, 1994). This dominant characteristic of machismo within the occupational culture encourages an orientation to crimefighting and a rejection of service style aspects of police work. Inherent in the structural context of police work is the importance of being emotionally resilient, being able to 'handle yourself' and demonstrating aggression and strength in order to fulfil the demands of operational police work. Observations suggest that these cultural prescriptions were endorsed by the majority of neighbourhood police officers working within both case study areas. Female PCSOs were acutely aware that they were working in a male dominated environment where emotions needed to be controlled, as PCSO Brooks explains;

> "Yeah I've had stick and they test you all of the time in how you react to stuff. But it's all bravado with most of them in the force. You've got to be able to take it...not be sensitive. It's male dominated so you've got to get in roads with it" (Interview with PCSO Brooks, p6).

Indeed, such was the pervasiveness of masculinity within neighbourhood teams that some female PCSOs, including PCSO Jameson below, felt that male PCSOs were more likely to be legitimised by police officers due to their instant inclusion into the masculine culture;

> "He [PCSO Preston] does rib me all of the time about being over-conscientious...he keeps saying, "you've got to learn to have a skive. That's what the job's all about". I don't like the thoughts of people thinking I'm a skiver....I'm not about to do his job for him but they [NPOs and supervisory officers] do think he's the blue eyed boy and can do no wrong...if there's a time when they need an extra body to do something that carries any possible risk they'll go to him first" (PCSO Jameson, Observation A21, p9).

The potential for confrontation presented by the nature of police work was also a potentially divisive factor with regards to the incorporation of PCSOs into the dominant culture. PCSO Elliot explained a situation where he was on

mobile patrol with a NPO and became involved in dealing with an incident that required the use of physical force,

> "I couldn't just sit there [in the van] so I stepped in to help [name of NPO] get hold of them...It was a situation where I had to step in and I was happy to do it, but I suppose it was lucky that I was able to help. I was thinking at the time, maybe it would have been different with one of the female PCSOs" (PCSO Elliot, Observation B8, p5).

The inclusion of such PCSO accounts are not to suggest that female PCSOs are treated in a sexist manner but to demonstrate the masculine nature of police work and the contribution that this provides in encouraging PCSOs to alter their behaviour in order to be deemed competent and meet the demands of routine police work.

The masculine culture also manifests itself in fostering a sense of competition within and across sectors resulting in a degree of rivalry between neighbourhood teams. It wasn't uncommon for police officers to compare their performance with others within other sectors, as demonstrated by the directions given by a community sergeant during a briefing with PCSOs, and during an interview with PCSO Elliot;

> [name of operation] was first implemented in [name of another sector] but success had been short lived, explained by a lack of attention, effort and investment by the neighbourhood team concerned. The sergeant confidently assured the PCSOs, "we'll show them it can succeed with the right people at the wheel...we're going to have to be 100% committed to get the results we need" (Observation A5, p1).

> "There's definitely competition between the three areas, but I would also say that there's a good deal of competition between the pairs of NPOs in here, cos we do take the piss a bit saying 'crime's up in the Terraces', what you doing about it?" (Interview with PCSO Elliot, p22).

A similar sense of competition extended to competition between PCSOs across sectors, transcending any attachment to fellow PCSOs working in

other areas, as articulated by PCSO Slater in discussing her role in securing an arrest;

> PCSO Slater - “We got a good show up last week. A job came over the radio so we said we’d go. I spotted this guy walking past. We weren’t sure whether it was him [a person wanted by the police] but we managed to meet back up with him by taking a different route and it was definitely him. So, we called it in and you should have seen them all [police officers] come running, even Inspector [name]. The whole place was surrounded. The funny thing was that it was the [neighbouring area’s] target but we got it! You couldn’t help feeling a bit smug about it” (Observation A25, p5).
>
> FC – “I suppose it’s times like that when the role really comes into its own?”
>
> PCSO – “Yeah, definitely. I mean there is a bit of rivalry between teams...You want your team to come out on top” (PCSO Sparks, Observation A27, p1).

All PCSOs understood the importance of performance within the culture of the station. However, Frustrated PCSOs were particularly eager to support neighbourhood police officers in achieving targets and united with them in their efforts to surpass the success of other teams in doing the same.

The emphasis on performance was clearly encouraged by traditional notions of police work embedded within the police culture. Even though neighbourhood police officers have a remit for order maintenance and service, they were driven by the promise for action and opportunities for crime control; so much so that they competed with one another to be the first to accept calls for service as and when they came over the radio;

> The weather was dreadful so one of the NPOs had invited us [myself and PCSO Fisher] to accompany him on mobile patrol for the evening. After twenty minutes of driving around, a nearby incident involving youth disorder came over the radio. One of the other NPOs was the first to respond. [The NPO], clearly disappointed at losing the job,

> remarked, “Typical of them two stealing the jobs when they come in...We’ll just have to hope something else comes up and that they’re preoccupied so we’ll get it” (Observation B27, p3).

Sharing similar exposure to the demands of police work as by fully sworn officers (Skolnick, 1966, Reiner, 2000) led some PCSOs, particularly those with high ambitions to become a police officer, to adopt a sense of mission in conducting their role and to affiliate themselves with ‘crimefighting’ rather than disorder or anti-social behaviour, (McConville, Sanders et al, 1991). This orientation is clearly demonstrated within the following excerpts;

> The NPOs were discussing a planned operation involving [police force], the City Council and the DVLA that was designed to target those who illegally park and evade paying car tax. I asked one of the NPOs if it was something they would like to get involved in. [name of NPO] said, “Nah, when I heard about it I felt like saying, “Come on, I’m a crime fighter, I’m not pissing about with that...I didn’t join the force to hound decent car owners, I joined to catch burglars and violent offenders!” (Observation B25, p1).

> We waited at the rear of the building in the event that [name of suspect] would try to evade detection by escaping through the back door as PCSO Sparks questioned those answering the door. PCSO Sparks remarked, “I know we’ve got to be here in case they try it, but at the same time you feel you’re missing out. You know you’re a part of the job but I just want to see his face when they cuff him. The amount of harm he’s done round here” (Observation A25, p6).

Eager to become involved in ‘real police work’, the majority of PCSOs, like PCSO Sparks above, shared the frustrations of their fellow neighbourhood officers about the floundering public consent for the police and the perceived inability of the criminal justice system to ‘get tough’ on youth crime and disorder. Frustrated PCSOs, such as PCSO Brooks and PCSO Lowe below, appeared to agree that adopting a sense of mission was the only way to

support prosecution; another sign of the willingness of some PCSOs to imitate their police officer counterparts.

> PCSO Brooks - “Did [name of suspect] get picked out then? [name of NPO] took great pleasure in telling her that the target in the parade had been identified by the victim. He added, “Aye, luckily, but we’re going to have to get as much as possible on him to try and stop him wheedling his way of it” (Observation B31, p1).

> PCSO Lowe - “He’ll [prolific young offender] probably try to slime out of it like he does with everything”
> NPO – “Don’t worry, he’s not getting away with it this time even if I have to spend all week on it” (Observation A14, p3).

The perceived inefficiency of the criminal justice system invariably leads to a degree of cynicism amongst both police officers and PCSOs with regards to the capacity of the organisation to control crime, (Skolnick, 1966, Cain, 1973, Holdaway, 1977, 1983, Chatterton, 1983, Smith and Gray, 1983). However, the majority of PCSOs also expressed frustration in relation to their capacity to support such aims due to the limitations within their role and the limited authority therein. Amongst some PCSOs, such frustration driven from role limitations and subsequent hostility from the public, such frustration culminates in cynicism and disenchantment with the role and distrustful in their dealings with the public;

> “You just get used to people being hostile towards you that it catches you off guard when someone is civil and appreciative” (PCSO Wilson, Observation, B14, p4).

However, this cynicism also extended to their beliefs in human nature; it was not uncommon for PCSOs who had lost some of their commitment to the role to be suspicious of seemingly innocuous public behaviour, as the following excerpts show;

> We heard some screaming and shouting from a large group of flats. "It's probably just people generally being loud or kids messing about, but you do get the feeling that they increase the volume when we're around, especially if there's a big group. All shouting in different directions to confuse you and turn your attention to those who are drinking or causing the bother...They're [young people] not daft that's for sure!" (PCSO Elliot, Observation B22, p3).
>
> "I'd want to see him [suspect] myself before I'd be sure he was there. I wouldn't be surprised if they were all involved in games to divert us away from where he really is" (PCSO Sparks, Observation A11, p5).

Observation of PCSOs on patrol and analysis of their engagement with neighbourhood police officers suggest that the majority of PCSOs did align themselves with characteristics of the traditional police culture for four reasons. First, alignment with the culture is a means of securing a greater sense of value within the organisation than that provided by the role as it currently stands. Second, endorsing shared cultural characteristics help to foster a sense of integration and solidarity with sworn officers. Third, cultural characteristics operated as coping mechanisms for the demands and risks inherent within police work (Paoline, 2003), and fourthly, there is a sense that PCSOs adopt cultural characteristics as a reaction to their efforts to become police officers being blocked. However, aside from the potential functional benefits of aligning themselves to the police culture, endorsement of the cultural characteristics of suspicion, solidarity, isolation, sense of mission and cynicism serves to strengthen PCSO commitment to crime control whilst weakening their commitment to community engagement and delivering reassurance. Clearly then, as reflected by Chan (1998) in relation to multiculturalism and police reform, the police culture is acting as a barrier towards the successful delivery of reassurance policing.

Summary

This chapter has argued that the majority of the PCSOs are fundamentally motivated by an aspiration to become a police officer. Whilst the PCSO role was presented as a means of supporting entry into the organisation, in practice, PCSOs find that the role does not provide the stepping stone they had hoped. In order to become effective, secure a sense of value and support future applications to become a police officer, PCSOs must develop the necessary skills, attributes and expertise to demonstrate competence within the role and feed into organisational objectives. These key skills or qualities, referred to as the craft of policing (Van Maanen, 1973, Fielding, 1989) are secured through cumulative experience of police work and by observing the actions and decision-making of fellow PCSOs and police officers. Reflecting the work of Chan (1996) in relation to what makes a 'good' police officer and Crawford (2004) concerning PCSO powers and capabilities, findings suggest that interpersonal skills of communication, persuasion and negotiation are fundamental in facilitating order maintenance, avoiding the escalation of conflict (Chan et al, 2003) and upholding police presentational strategies (Fielding, 1984, Manning, 1995) since PCSOs are unable to draw upon recourse to the law to secure compliance.

In their efforts towards integration and securing a sense of value, PCSOs learn to adapt to the lack of authority within the role by aligning themselves with the traditional characteristics of police culture (Reiner, 2000) including suspicion, solidarity, isolation and cynicism, and developing an orientation to police work that is conducive to crimefighting and the crime control objectives of the organisation. Despite variation in the degree to which individual PCSOs endorsed cultural characteristics displayed by police officer colleagues, it would appear that the traditional police culture and the performance culture of the organisation strongly influence the construction of PCSO occupational identities, PCSO orientations to the role and ultimately the commitment of PCSOs to the delivery of 'softer' forms of policing (Innes, 2005) and ultimately, reassurance.

The subsequent chapter explores the challenges experienced by PCSOs in maintaining order and delivering reassurance within communities of conflict. Operating with limited powers of enforcement and authority, the chapter demonstrates the ways in which PCSOs target efforts to reassure and utilise their command of craft skills to augment exert control and provide operational support to front line police work.

Chapter 6 – Reassurance, Community and Discretionary Policing

Introduction

A central aspect of the PCSO remit is to provide reassurance through visible patrol, engagement and tackling lower level crime and disorder. Whilst patrol can be targeted to maximise levels of police presence in communities, reassurance also requires positive engagement with the public and enforcement if 'signal crimes' identified by the public are to be tackled (Innes, 2006). However, such a remit is a difficult ambition to achieve in practice. As a consequence of their restricted role and powers, and operating within communities of conflict, PCSOs experience significant obstacles in 'doing' and achieving reassurance. In order to explore the challenges faced by PCSOs in delivering reassurance, this chapter is developed around three central themes; legitimacy and engagement, authority and hostility, and credibility. In the absence of literature concerning PCSO decision-making and experiences of police work, the discussion, where relevant, draws upon supporting evidence relating to the occupational experience of sworn officers for support.

Divided into two sections, the first section argues that PCSOs deliver reassurance according to ideas of respectability and conflict. Contrary to principles of community policing, PCSOs do not deliver reassurance equally throughout target communities. Faced with limited public consensus, mistrust and apathy by significant sections of the public who contest their legitimacy, PCSOs redirect their attention to addressing the concerns and needs of the vulnerable and respectable, often at the expense of the young and those sections of the community deemed as 'police property' (Van Maanen, 1973, Young, 1991). The second section explores the ways in which PCSOs develop their craft skills, outlined in the previous chapter, in response to their experiences of doing reassurance. PCSOs adapt to their limited authority by mastering craft skills of communication, negotiation and persuasion and by adopting differing approaches in their dealings with the public depending on the level of threat posed and the likelihood of

compliance. The chapter concludes by asserting that PCSOs are able to police communities through a framework of reassurance and provide operational support to front line neighbourhood policing despite role restrictions, limited consensus and challenges to their legitimacy.

Section 1 – Respectable Fears, Vulnerable Communities and Reassurance Policing

Whilst PCSOs are able to provide visibility and accessibility within target areas, their capacity to provide familiarity and reassurance is constrained by a lack of willingness of local residents to engage and low levels of public consensus in the police. Reflecting the work of Skolnick (1966) and Van Maanen (1977), it quickly became clear during observations that there were certain pockets within target communities who did not welcome PCSOs and were unwilling to engage. Not only was such opposition a significant obstacle to PCSO engagement with such groups, but there was a real sense that those who supported the police were unwilling to engage due to the potential for recrimination. Working in an environment where they are treated with disdain and suspicion led to a belief amongst a number of PCSOs that they were working against rather than alongside local communities. This inherent conflict between PCSOs and target communities is demonstrated by the following comments made by PCSOs;

> "The trouble is nobody wants to get involved or be seen getting involved in anything in case it comes back to them and so instead of building relations and tackling problems all we can do is react afterwards" (PCSO Fisher, Observation B27, p1).

> "You often get different reactions out on the street. The funniest thing I've ever seen is people averting their eyes, they don't look you in the face when you walk past them, and you're trying to make eye contact to say hello and they won't , it's head down in the street and if you do

speak to us everyone immediately calls you a grass" (Interview with PCSO Slater, p12).

"You have to fight for the slightest ounce of respect in [name of area] and even then they're inconsistent. One day they'll be all nicey nicey and the next you'll get evil looks...people in [name of area] are too scared to be seen talking to us" (PCSO Preston, Observation A20, p5).

Such opposition and unwillingness to engage weakens recommendations within the literature on community policing, particularly those of Grinc (1994) and Block (1971), that community policing efforts ought to be targeted within areas with high opposition to police in order to improve public satisfaction of policing. Not only were residents unwilling to engage, as demonstrated by PCSO Slater below, but a large proportion were openly opposed to any police presence in the area due to a deep rooted distrust in the police organisation. There was a clear sense within certain pockets of target communities that there was an absence of shared beliefs between local residents and the police organisation; residents had rejected the police as legitimate authorities and had distanced themselves from the moral obligation to obey the police and the normative standards and rules they seek to uphold (Beetham, 1991). Such sentiments are demonstrated by the following comments made by PCSO Spencer and PCSO Fisher;

"We've got to be in areas where we can make relations and there are always going to be pockets where no matter what you do they won't engage. It's often a generational thing where it's passed down and nothing to do with experience. Then again, I often think that it's those who say 'I'd never call the police', are gonna need us at some point. If you go through life without needing the police especially round here, you're very, very lucky" (Interview with PCSO Slater, p14).

"I detest being in [name of area]....Why should I keep sticking my neck out for them and try and coax them to work with us when they hate you being there in the first place?" (PCSO Spencer, Observation A12, p3).

> "There's no way we're going to make a difference in [area] because they [residents] have absolutely no respect for the law, what we're trying to do and it's the majority who are against us, not the minority. I mean there's no point in us trying to talk to them when they blank you and it just makes us look stupid as all they want is confrontation" (PCSO Fisher, Observation B12, p2).

Despite hostile relations within target communities, PCSOs made concerted efforts towards information exchange in order to 'win hearts and minds' (Skolnick and Bayley, 1986, Greene and Mastrofski, 1988). This included sharing photographs of suspects with proprietors of off licences as part of specific strategies to tackle underage drinking, learning Urdu to assist relations with minority groups, and the use of a a mobile police station within hotspot areas. Even where individual PCSOs were able to engage, information exchange was commonly restricted within some communities to a 'need to know' basis demonstrating that even though mutual obligation to the police had diminished, mutual obligation to each other and moral norms of the community had not (Beetham, 1991). In these areas, residents tended to rely upon methods of self-policing similar to that explored by Johnson (1999) in his analysis of private policing. In these communities, involvement of the police, as demonstrated in the examples below, tended only to occur when residents were unable to resolve problems themselves;

> Resident - "I see [name] is up in court on Monday?"
>
> PCSO Carruthers – "Yeah, thanks to you and others round here we had a whole load of stuff on him"
>
> Resident – "Well, that's cos he was taking things too far, smashing the place up and everything. You see we'll tell you stuff but we won't tell you everything that goes on, just the stuff that we need to" (Observation A25, p3).
>
> "The problem is that it's so deeply in them, this sort of distrust of the police, it's almost alien to get us involved. Not saying that they're like vigilantes or nothing, but they do tend to try and sort things out

themselves instead of getting in touch with us" (PCSO Clark, Observation, B9, p3).

Willingness to engage with PCSOs and the police organisation more widely was also confounded by apathy and negative experiences of police work leading to a lack of confidence in neighbourhood policing teams to tackle persistent crime and disorder problems (Garland, 1992, Grinc, 1994, Skogan and Hartnett, 1997, Reisig and Giocomazzi, 1998). Police legitimacy had been lost due to the failure of individual police officers to act professionally or sensitively and/or adequately respond (Tyler, 2004).Despite their lack of involvement in resident's previous negative encounters with the police, the performance of individual officers often falls to PCSOs to explain due to their increased visibility and accessibility. As illustrated within the following encounter involving PCSO Sparks and comments made by PCSO Carruthers during interview, PCSOs typically respond to such cases by apologising, encouraging those involved to continue to contact the police and by making assurances of their commitment and that of the organisation to their safety;

Resident – "Next time it might be worse and I'll wait even longer for you [police] to get here!...If I speak to them on the phone and they hear my accent, they wait for ages and don't come out cos I'm not from around here"

PCSO Sparks – It's not that. It's perhaps because we have other priorities we have to respond to. [name of police force] provide an equal service to all groups so you mustn't let anything in the past tarnish you from calling the police. We're in the area, so stop and let us know".

The woman half-heartedly thanked PCSO Sparks then closed the door.

PCSO Sparks – "See you then", then turned to me and said, "See what it's like here, we're on a losing battle! (Observation A16, p9).

> "It's hard but all you can do is apologise, try not to comment too much and just say you can't answer for the actions of other officers. What I tend to do is reassure them that you're onto it and feedback information to them once we've chased it up, and above anything not make any promises for action in the future cos you can't predict what'll happen. It's frustrating for them cos they want action straightaway but all you can do is try and turn around any negativity" (PCSO Carruthers, Observation A3, p3).

Only by redirecting attention from previous experience of policing and towards future efforts by themselves and the organisation can PCSOs hope to provide reassurance and improve public satisfaction with policing. However, PCSOs are restricted in the action they might take to resolve problems due to their role limitations and limited authority, and are therefore dependent upon sworn police officers to provide enforcement and maintain legitimacy. Public confidence may therefore be further undermined due to the inability of PCSOs to satisfy public expectations.

In reaction to limited public support and apathy within target communities, PCSOs direct their efforts towards reassuring those deemed most vulnerable who are more likely to be appreciate their efforts; the elderly and victims of racial victimisation;

> "There are probably five times as many people who are appreciative of what we're doing, but we don't necessarily get to hear about that as we don't have as much contact with them. If you look on [name of street], you've got a lot of vulnerable, old people who are having to put up with the disorder and anti-social behaviour day after day so we're here for them. Just knowing there's someone else with communication who can get an officer down is going to reassure them that the police are doing something" (Interview with PCSO Carruthers, p11).

> PCSO Slater told me that relations with the African community were developing due to their increased efforts to engage with them.

PCSO Slater – “I’ve done a few race revisits over the last week and every single one said they felt much better because they’re getting to know us and feel reassured that we’re walking around. They’re often isolated so it’s important that we get a dialogue going” (Observation A10, p5).

However, it is not only the ‘vulnerable’ who PCSOs seek to reassure. PCSOs also focus their efforts upon protecting and representing the interests of law abiding, ‘respectable’ members of the community. Groups falling within this category of respectability include the elderly and young children, who possess ideal victim status, home owners and local businesses, community activists and resident groups. It is these ‘respectable’ groups who are more likely to perceive PCSOs as legitimate, credible members of the police organisation and therefore to welcome PCSOs into the community. This notion of ‘respectability’ within police work has long been recognised within sociological studies of policing and police culture (Van Maanen, 1973, Cohen, 1979, Waddington, 1999, Brogden and Nijhar, 2005). These studies suggest that police officers, not only aim to uphold the law through coercive control, but operate to reinforce community values and the prevailing standards of morality and respectability. As PCSOs become socialised into the police culture, they, like police officers, look to these ‘respectable’ sections of the community for support and legitimacy, as attested to from the three PCSOs below;

“Probably 60% of people I deal with, maybe even more, have absolutely no respect for the police, got probably an active dislike of the police. But the decent people we do deal with do appreciate us and give us respect” (Interview with PCSO Elliot, p8).

“It makes all the difference...You know, getting on that personal level with them, because you go in and say I’m [name], I’m a community support officer in the area, you’ve seen us out and about and that straightaway puts them at ease knowing you’re out there...I also think with me, it’s always Mr or Mrs so you’ve got that respect. It gives them their dignity back because if they’re putting up with going out and

> asking the kids to turn the noise down and they're being told to f off, it's gonna really knock the dignity out of them. So, you reassure them and say we're gonna get to the bottom of this and take it seriously, then they know we're on their side" (Interview with PCSO Slater, p18).

> We were approached by a manager of a local Chinese takeaway, known to the police as a repeat victim of disorderly behaviour. Addressing both PCSO Spencer and PCSO Sparks as 'Officer', he informed the PCSOs of a number of incidents involving young people throwing eggs at his windows, intimidating customers outside his premises and abusing his staff...PCSO Spencer sympathised with the man, reassured him that he would get one of the NPOs to visit him that evening and would direct the PCSOs on shift that evening to patrol the area. The man, seeming happy with their reaction, thanked them and crossed to the other side of the street. PCSO Spencer remarked, "we'll have to have a word with [NPO], maybe get the footage [CCTV] and make sure everyone on the team is familiarised with what's happening so we can nip this in the bud" (Observation A23, p3).

Reassurance and community support is therefore not equally distributed to all sections of target communities but is directed towards those who offer consent, a willingness to engage and therefore legitimacy to the PCSO.

Whilst 'respectable' members of the community might be aware of the PCSOs' civilian status, they respect the authority of the police organisation as the embodiment of the law and societal values and are subsequently more likely to award PCSOs legitimacy, comply with requests made and offer co-operation (Cohen, 1979, Tyler, 2004). It is in being able to assure respectable sections of the community of their dedication to tackling problems that matter to them that PCSOs are able to re-establish moral norms and values (Jackson and Sunshine, 2007). Indeed, the capacity of some PCSOs to provide sustained support and engagement led some 'respectable' members of the community to hold PCSOs in higher esteem than police officers, as illustrated in the following excerpt;

> As we waited in the reception for the officers to arrive, one of the teachers passed us and asked, “You still waiting for them? You could be out solving crimes!” to which Tracey joked, ‘We’re PCSOs, careful you’re putting us in the same bracket’. The teacher replied, “You’ve always been on the same level as far as we’re concerned”, then as an aside said to me, “well in some cases, even better” (Observation B6, p3).

Representing the interests of the vulnerable and the respectable ultimately leads to PCSOs supporting police officers in targeting those who threaten the security and quality of life of these respectable groups; that is the anti-social and the young (Waddington, 1999). Reflecting observations made by Loftus (2008) regarding discriminatory police practices of police against the socially and economically deprived, the following comment provided by PCSO Wilson suggests that PCSOs are utilised an additional means of controlling the socially and economically disadvantaged;

> “On the whole, I think we work more against the white working class and those who don’t work by keeping a close eye on them all of the time even when they’re not up to no good” (PCSO Wilson, Observation, B25, p4).

However, PCSOs do not always act against the interests of the young. Whilst the congregation of young people within an area may be a cause for concern and complaint for ‘respectable’ residents, PCSOs are required to exercise a degree of tolerance when dealing with such groups if they are to avoid alienating themselves entirely from young people in the area. Much to the frustration of less tolerant residents, PCSOs do not tend to move young people on unless the group is causing a disturbance or if they have received a complaint about noise. The use of discretion by PCSOs in dealing with young people is therefore frequently at odds with expectations of the respectable, as demonstrated by the following three excerpts;

> We made a detour to the property finding no youths in the vicinity. PCSO Elliot told me they would pass the property a few times to give the resident a chance to see us. PCSO Brooks commented, “It’s

difficult to try and satisfy what people want.... when we do come they expect that we'll rush in and be all authoritative but we have a different role to the police...often we couldn't follow it through" (Observation B13, p3).

PCSO Sparks – "We'll go round and see what the fuss is about. If they're just playing football away from the houses and not causing any trouble then I'm not moving them. I might suggest to them that they move to the field but they've got a right to play in the street as well" (Observation A8, p4).

PCSO Clark - "We won't move them if they're not doing anything wrong, we'll just need to get them to calm it down and let them know we're in the area so they'll keep it that way"

PCSO2 Wilson – Aye, people round here weren't fitted with volume control but we can't keep moving them on for everything" (Observation B16, p6).

Crime control demands of the organisation can also mitigate against protecting the interests of the respectable. Whilst keen to represent the needs of the respectable, PCSOs are also required to balance public expectations with organisational demands. PCSOs were fully aware of the difficulties in communicating to the public that they are a police resource to be directed where the need is greatest. Rather, PCSOs identified an expectation amongst some 'respectable' residents for PCSOs to be available to them at all times, as demonstrated in the following conversation between PCSOs Elliot and Wilson;

PCSO Elliot - "We've got to go down to [name of street]. [name of resident] has called again saying there are kids smashing bottles"

PCSO Wilson– "It's his fault cos he says to her 'don't hesitate in contacting us if you're concerned about anything' so she's on the phone all of the time and when we get down there, there's usually nowt going on"

FC – “Is that because they’ve moved by the time you get there?

PCSO Wilson – “Maybe, but it’s more than likely that she just wants us there. It’s like when you go to the resident groups, they’re great for reassurance but they expect you to be there all of the time and you can’t always promise that” (Observation, B13, p3).

The capacity of PCSOs to foster public support and provide reassurance to vulnerable and ‘respectable’ residents is tempered not only by the restrictions of their role, but by the crime control demands of the organisation. As discussed in the following chapter, PCSOs are frequently diverted from their efforts to reassure due to operational demand, leading to their involvement in reactive police work and activities outside their remit. PCSO Spencer was particularly concerned about the detrimental impact of ‘mission creep’ upon relationships with the ‘respectable’;

“What about the people we’ve promised we’ll walk around their areas....it means they lose faith in our work and think we’re just saying that. Working like this [as a reactive resource] totally defeats why the PCSO role was brought in in the first place...We might as well do away with having dedicated footbeats and not get to know anyone” (PCSO Spencer, Observation A12, p2).

PCSO efforts towards reassurance and improving public satisfaction with policing are clearly therefore secondary to organisational demands for crime control.

The decision for the PCSO uniform to be closely matched to that of sworn officers leaves little doubt of the intention of the government for PCSOs to operate as a visible deterrent to criminal and anti-social behaviour (Cooper, 2006). However, PCSO credibility can be undermined or denied when PCSOs are working in the presence of police officers. This was aptly demonstrated during an incident whereby a pair of PCSOs had been stopped by two members of the public to report persistent youth disorder;

PCSO Spencer and PCSO Sparks were speaking to a warden [housing] and a female who were recalling an incident of youth

> disorder...The moment that [name of NPO] arrived on the scene and asked what the problem was the man stopped talking to the PCSOs and directed his full attention to the NPO. The NPO suggested a more private meeting the following day instead of speaking about the matter in public. The warden agreed and thanked the NPO for his help adding, "I'm just relieved we're going to get it sorted' before turning round and leaving without any such gratitude to the PCSOs for their help" (Observation A16, p2).

The achievement of reassurance and the degree of legitimacy awarded to PCSOs from the 'respectable' is therefore not only determined by their level of support for the police but is also influenced by the capacity of PCSOs to satisfy public expectations, particularly their ability to enforce. Indeed, PCSOs working within both case study areas articulated feeling a pressure to enforce by the public despite role limitations;

> "You've always got the expectations of the public. You're constantly being watched and judged and it looks terrible if you don't do what they expect a police officer to do. But obviously you can't always do what people expect you to do because if it comes down to some people's decision, half the population would be in prison!" (Interview with PCSO Elliot 10, p6).

> PCSO Wilson - "When we come down they expect that we'll rush in and be all authoritative but we have a different role to the police. We've got to get along and try and engage otherwise it's just more of the same [traditional policing]" (Observation B30, p3).

The limited capacity of PCSOs to act detrimentally impacts on perceptions of effectiveness and legitimacy held by the 'respectable'. Whilst PCSOs have the potential to reassure by providing visibility, accessibility and familiarity, any positive impact on public confidence and any credibility they may have built with citizens are threatened by their limited capacity to respond as a sworn police officer, i.e. with enforcement. Whilst PCSOs are better able to satisfy the requirements of 'soft' policing due to role limitations (Innes, 2005), they experience difficulty in satisfying public expectations and desires for

enforcement. In order to protect their legitimacy in the eyes of the 'respectable', PCSOs therefore make concerted efforts to explain their wider contribution to members of the public, as illustrated in the following observation;

> "Sometimes you know it might seem that we're doing nothing when they're [young people] acting up and we're not taking action there and then. But often we're just round the corner on the radio getting a team down and we'll be putting it all in the pot to get something done. That's what we did with [name of young offender who received an ASBO] (PCSO Carruthers, Observation A7, p2).

Thus, in circumstances where PCSOs are unable to take direct action, they can either defer responsibility for enforcement to agents outside the organisation, for example, housing providers or local authorities, or to affiliate themselves with sworn officers. As a consequence of their restricted remit, training and capacity to act, the ability of PCSOs to secure legitimate status within target communities is therefore ultimately dependent upon the credibility and enforcement capabilities of police officers rather than their individual efforts to engage and reassure.

Section 2 – The Craft of PCSO Work and the Use of Discretion

Like fully sworn officers, PCSOs need to develop 'dictionary' knowledge of the spatial geography of their patches and the normal routines, activities and behaviour of those within (Bittner, 1967, Van Maanen, 1973). However, unlike sworn officers, they cannot rely on the same tactics used by sworn officers due to their limited authority and inability to draw upon the law as a means of inducing compliance and maintaining order. In response to their experiences of 'doing reassurance', PCSOs develop a 'craft' that is both similar to and at odds with that of regular officers. Whilst police officers might utilise craft skills of communication, persuasion and negotiation in the first instance, they can exercise their authority by enforcing or threatening to

enforce the law in the event of non-compliance (Chatterton, 1979, Manning, 1995, Chan et al, 1996). Working with limited powers of enforcement, PCSOs must adapt to the limitations and lack of authority within their role in order to approach, engage and develop relations within local communities. This section is structured into four parts; the first explores the decision making process conducted by PCSOs in deciding whether to intervene in an incident or situation, the second explores the ways in which PCSOs deal with their experience of hostility and abuse from the public as a result of their limited authority, the third explores the approaches or styles of engagement adopted by PCSOs to facilitate engagement and encourage compliance, and the fourth demonstrates PCSOs use of discretion when dealing with anti-social behaviour and youth disorder.

In so doing, this section demonstrates the dependence of PCSOs upon craft skills of communication, persuasion and negotiation in gaining compliance and maintaining order. Whilst the limited authority within their role can serve to pacify situations of conflict, it can also provoke hostility and abuse amongst those members of the public PCSOs seek to control, particularly young people, to which PCSOs are unable to respond. In response to the lack of authority within their role, PCSOs adopt one of two approaches or styles in their dealings with the public; a befriending or an authoritative approach. Despite the influence of situational and interpersonal variables and the availability of NPOs to provide support, the lack of authority within the PCSO role leads to a style of policing that is more likely to emphasise befriending and the use of discretion over authority and enforcement.

The Decision to Approach and Intervene

As illustrated in the previous chapter, PCSOs receive very limited training prior to their deployment. Whilst newly appointed PCSOs can look to their more experienced PCSO colleagues for advice and guidance in decision making, PCSOs develop their own individual approaches to the job to maintain legitimacy and assert authority. A crucial aspect of doing so, as

asserted by Bayley and Bittner (1984) in elucidating styles of police officers, is to develop an effective means of approaching, communicating and engaging with various sections of the community based on the exigencies of any given situation that enables them to maintain legitimacy and authority. In approaching members of the public, PCSOs must primarily consider the level of threat posed by an individual or group of individuals, the most effective means of resolving an issue or tackling a problem given the limitations of the role and the availability of sworn officers to provide support. Such an understanding involves a sensitive appreciation of craft knowledge as exemplified in the work of Bayley and Bittner (1984), Chatterton (1995) and Chan (1999). This was aptly explained by PCSO Carruthers when explaining the process of developing her approach to challenging young people,

> "I suppose it's getting what you feel comfortable with. See, I know, I'm never going to be able to outrun a teenager, I'm never gonna be able to manage if I got in conflict with them, I could create more bother, I've got to do what I've got to do the way I can do it...I mean, there's no use approaching somebody if you feel like you're going to get into more bother...Because I mean, none of us are in a position really to be tackling people because we haven't got the equipment and we haven't been trained" (Interview with PCSO Carruthers, p3).

PCSOs consider a range of interpersonal and situational or environmental factors in their decision to approach an individual and/or given situation. Reflecting the work of Brown (1988), Quinton, Bland and Miller (2000) and Poyser (2004) in relation to police decision-making, interpersonal factors considered by PCSOs relate to the demeanour of the individual and their reaction to the PCSO's presence, whereas situational factors relate to the offending history of the individual, their potential for violence and/or evidence of drug or alcohol misuse, previous interactions between the PCSO and individuals involved and the presence of bystanders, for example, victims and or witnesses. PCSO Slater explains the thought process involved following her decision to approach an individual or incident;

> “Straightaway you need to assess if anybody’s hurt, how quickly you need back up, but you also need to consider your knowledge of that person prior to dealing with them, what they’re capable of, because there’s some you know from their intelligence that they wouldn’t think twice about hitting an officer nevermind a PCSO, whether they normally take drugs, or if they go equipped, if they have any mental health problems....how they’ve been with you in the past as well because normally if they’ve been alright with you once, they’re more likely to again” (Interview with PCSO Slater, p6).

What was clear from discussions with PCSOs was the importance of flexibility and the ability to construct an approach according to persons involved and/or the nature of the issue at hand. Indeed, PCSO Carruthers likened the importance of flexibility in approach to that of a chameleon; that is, in order to maintain legitimacy and credibility, it is necessary for PCSOs to adapt to the changing environment in which they are situated and the variations in risk and conflict with which they are presented.

PCSOs learn quickly the importance of risk assessment in approaching any given situation. Whilst PCSOs do not routinely engage with individuals who present a risk to their safety, if and when they encounter such individuals whilst on patrol they are expected to contact NPOs and/or the control room to take further necessary action rather than intervene themselves. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, the ability of PCSOs to assess the level of threat within any given situation and their abilities of dealing with it is dependent upon cumulative experience in the role, as explained by PCSO Sparks;

> “This job does stand you in good stead for being an officer cos it’s all about being able to judge each situation and having a sense of whether something is worth pursuing or not, whether it’s serious, whether it’s within your remit and you need to learn to do that” (PCSO Sparks, Observation A19, p10).

Whilst on patrol PCSOs are frequently confronted with individuals behaving in a drunk and disorderly manner and/or individuals suffering from emotional

or mental health problems that may cause them to be volatile and act unpredictably. In these situations, assessing the risk posed by these individuals and utilising craft skills of communication and persuasion are imperative if they are to maintain control. Tactics utilised by PCSOs in situations of potential conflict included remaining calm and communicating clearly (Chan et al, 1996), adopting a courteous and respectful demeanour (Skogan 1990) and efforts to "placate and mollify" (Bayley and Bittner, 1984, 50). This was certainly the case during an incident whereby PCSO Slater had stumbled across an inebriated man whilst on patrol who had sustained an injury to his head;

> "At first he was a bit aggressive asking me what I wanted and if I was going to arrest him. I reassured him I wasn't, started talking, you know, softly and all concerned telling him I'd got a call saying someone was injured, that there was nothing to worry about and I just wanted to check he was ok...He was fine after that and told me I was a good one [police officer] so I felt ok and called it in. Then a few minutes later the van arrived and the officers didn't deal with it in the same way...had no patience with him. The situation escalated a bit and he started lashing out, getting mouthy and that. In the end he ended up getting arrested and I remember thinking as they loaded him into the van, it was all under control and all he needed was to sleep it off" (PCSO Slater, Observation A13, p2).

This example not only suggests that the limited capabilities and powers of PCSOs can have a calming effect on a potentially hostile situation, but that the use of a befriending, rather than an authoritative, approach can be more effective in securing control and compliance. PCSO Slater, and other PCSOs who prefer to adopt a befriending approach in dealings with the public, therefore draw upon principles of procedural justice to reinforce their legitimacy and to support compliance (Tyler and Huo, 2002, Tyler, 2006). However, this is not always the case.

Dealing with Hostility and Abuse

Utilising an approach conducive to procedural based policing does not always enable PCSOs to secure respect and legitimacy by all individuals from whom they seek compliance. Despite PCSO efforts to engage, PCSOs typically find that their limited powers of enforcement and authority serve to reduce their legitimacy and credibility particularly amongst young people. The capacity of PCSOs to secure respect and legitimacy is hindered by the limitations of their role leading to denial of their legitimacy (Crawford, 2008). This seems to contradict Weber's (1968) assertion that compliance is not dependent on power or authority; PCSOs might act in a procedurally just manner but are not rewarded with legitimacy due to their limited powers to exert authority and limited ability to impose sanctions for non-compliance. As demonstrated in the two examples below, such challenges to their legitimacy can provoke verbal abuse and threats of violence;

> "We were on patrol down by the river and we see those two coming towards us on mini-motos. As they got closer they sped up and deliberately aimed at us so me and [PCSO Jameson] were forced to separate to the edge of the path, narrowly missing [PCSO Jameson]. They sped off laughing thinking they were so clever" (PCSO Preston, Observation A24, p4).

> As we walked PCSO Wilson told me about an incident that had occurred the previous day with a group of notorious young offenders. The group concerned was trying to get into a locked public park and PCSO Elliot had shouted over to ask them what they were doing.

> PCSO Wilson explained, "They started shouting abuse at us, calling us 'plastic', black bastards, you name it, then proceeded to throw cans and bottles at us. I could understand if we were reprimanding them or taking their drink away, but that's what they're like" (Observation B26, p1).

Indeed some young people tended to be antagonistic even when approaching PCSOs for assistance, as demonstrated in an account in one such situation;

> "We crossed a main thoroughfare and were approached by a teenage girl and boy. The girl wanted to know why one of the neighbourhood police officers wanted to get in touch with her. PCSO Elliot, knowing the girl by name, took some details from her. She cheekily remarked, 'You gonna do a stop check on uz now like you usually do? PCSO Elliot explained, "I need the information when I call so it's up to you whether you want this sorting out". The girl answered back, 'You know it already, why bother? PCSO Elliot calmly stated, "I don't know your date of birth do I? The girl scowled in response (PCSO Ellliot, Observation A23, p2).

Certainly, both PCSOs and NPOs articulated a need to develop a 'thick skin' in dealing with abuse in order to deal with the challenges of police work and continue in the role. As one NPO suggested,

> "It naturally takes them [PCSOs] a little while to get used to it, but you've got to look at it as part and parcel of what we do" (NPO Focus Group 2, p2).

As such, PCSOs Slater and Preston stressed the importance of becoming accustomed to working in an environment of conflict, stressing the need to remain professional when faced with hostility;

> "It's got to be water off a duck's back. It just makes me laugh, they call the police, they call you, and I mean, it's not personal, it's the uniform they're calling, the authority of the police in general" (Interview with PCSO Slater, p14).

> "When we come across groups of kids and they act the way they do towards us, I've seen cops get the same so I think when people think we get a lot of stick, the cops get a lot as well so it's not just our role that causes the abuse" (Interview with PCSO Preston, p9).

The identification of potential hostility as somehow being an occupational hazard clearly supports Skolnick's (1966) emphasis on the inevitable danger in police work. Whilst PCSOs do not have the same powers of enforcement and authority to their police officer counterparts, they nonetheless face potential risk in executing their duties. This sense of danger not only binds PCSOs together but unites them in their shared experience with police officers, supporting group solidarity as a coping mechanism to the abuse, (Skolnick, 1966, Van Maanen, 1973, Manning, 1999). One such coping mechanism adopted by PCSOs was to develop an understanding that abuse was a direct reaction to the police uniform and their remit for controlling youth disorder rather than towards them as individuals. The two accounts below suggest that PCSOs are more likely to cause antagonistic reactions from young people rather than engagement as typically experienced by neighbourhood wardens due to their membership within the police organisation;

> "That's how I would define us, as youth police. That's what we do. Very rarely do we deal with adults so unlike the wardens we're more geared to tackling behaviour and keeping an eye on them, so you can see why they are the way they are because we're regulating them. I mean, 90 per cent of the time we're dealing with the kids and confiscating alcohol" (Interview 6, p16).

> "Wardens can get closer to the kids than we can cos they don't have the uniform. I mean they've been able to organise a footie team and activities for the kids and the kids are more likely to talk to them, even when they're acting up. It's all to do with their disrespect for the police" (Observation A5, p3).

The denial of legitimacy by young people is informed by a legitimacy deficit between these groups and the police organisation (Beetham, 1991), but is equally likely to be shaped by the over-policing and control of young people by PCSOs within target communities. Notwithstanding efforts of some PCSOs (particularly Professional PCSOs) towards engagement and fairness, young people observe a lack of fairness stemming from collective police

efforts from both PCSOs and NPOs to control and regulate their behaviour. These individuals therefore experience decisions that are unfavourable – such as the confiscation of alcohol, imposing control upon their movements, and the imposition of anti-social behaviour sanctions - more frequently than those that are favourable (Tyler, 2006). In short, the introduction of PCSOs for those young people who engage in anti-social behaviour and disorder and who reject PCSOs as legitimate authorities has led to increased police attention and has supported their criminalisation.

Other PCSOs held similar beliefs perceiving the hostility from young people as bravado and an attempt to impress their peers rather than as a direct threat, as expressed by PCSO Lowe below;

> "We went past the Boxing Club and as we walked up [name of street] he [teenager] shouted, 'You wanker!' The thing is it's all dramatics and we always have the last laugh taking their drink off them. They're too scared to say it to your face" (PCSO Lowe, Observation B12, p2).

However, not all PCSOs involved in the study were resilient to unprovoked challenges to their authority, particularly when they had experienced more severe threatening behaviour. In such circumstances, PCSOs explained feeling frustrated, helpless and undermined. Their recollections of incidents involved spitting, aggressive intimidation and pushing and shoving by individuals and groups of intoxicated teenagers, as revealed in the example below;

> I entered the office to find PCSO Fisher completing a witness statement and PCSO Wilson checking the PNC. PCSO Fisher explained how she had been assaulted earlier that afternoon by a teenage boy whilst on patrol. She was sworn at, spat at, and sprayed with deodorant as the perpetrator tried to light it with his disposable lighter. PCSO Fisher, evidently upset remarked, "They weren't provoked at all, I wasn't taking their drink off them or anything....They're just idiots".... PCSO Wilson later informed me that PCSO Fisher had told her that she had felt 'completely helpless' as she had nothing with which to defend herself" (Observation B31, p1).

PCSOs also face hostility from members of the public who are over 18 and who do not recognise their authority. Upon encountering abuse PCSOs will try to engage in the first instance by using their craft skills of communication, persuasion and negotiation. However, unlike police officers, PCSOs lack a legal framework from which to draw upon (Chatterton, 1975) and often find they are powerless to respond when such tactics fail to induce compliance. This inability to act was experienced by PCSO Fisher in the following situation;

> "As we walked up [name of street] we saw two men on the street corner drinking cans of lager. PCSO Fisher confidently approached, 'Down that quickly please. You can't drink on the street'. The man shrugged, stared at us and made no effort to do so. In an effort to show she was being fair PCSO Fisher said, 'Look, it's an alcohol exclusion zone. I could ask you to pour it out, but I'm giving you the option of drinking it'. The man smirked, clearly unconvinced by the PCSO's authority. Smirking, he said, 'Well, I'll just walk down the street and you can try and catch me'. In the absence of options of enforcement, PCSO Fisher shook her head and said to me, 'Come on. Forget it'. As we walked away we heard one of the men shout, 'Run away then...******* plastic police'. PCSO Fisher continued walking without looking back. As we walked PCSO Fisher joked, 'It's on the wrong side of the street anyway [being technically across the sector boundary]...it's not worth getting assaulted over' (Observation B32, p3).

These examples clearly demonstrate the reality of threat faced by PCSOs on patrol. Whilst none of the PCSOs had sustained an injury from such incidents of abuse, the level of threat posed by individuals encountered on patrol was becoming increasingly unpredictable. Not only do PCSOs not have the necessary protective equipment to defend themselves should they need to, but they are powerless to act in such situations and must rely on, where available, police officer colleagues to assert authority and restore order, further undermining their authority and legitimacy.

PCSO Approaches to Engagement

When approaching any given situation, PCSOs tend to adopt one of two approaches or personas; a more tolerant, befriending approach that utilises craft skills of communication, negotiation and persuasion or a more authoritative, less discretionary approach. In the absence of powers of enforcement, the majority of PCSOs are more likely to adopt a befriending approach (adopted by nine out of twelve PCSOs) in approaching members of the public, particularly young people. As explained by PCSO Fisher, "You quickly learn that you need to have very persuasive social skills as that's all you've got" (Observation B12, p3).This reflects the work of Crawford et al in their evaluation of PCSOs in West Yorkshire, who identifies persuasion and negotiation as PCSOs, 'most potent means of inducing compliance", (Crawford, 2004, 81). PCSOs therefore adapt to the lack of authority within the role by clinging further to their ability to communicate effectively, empathise, and problem-solve. Whilst the majority of PCSOs tended to adopt a befriending approach, PCSOs also acknowledged the influence of individual orientations the role interpersonal skills and the nature of their relationship with those involved, as demonstrated by the following excerpts;

> "A couple of us might do things one way whereas others working in a different area might do things another. Some people are more, sort of, into working with others in partnership and community wise sort of things. Others are more into getting involved in cracking down on the kids" (PCSO Preston, Interview 3, p1).

> "It depends upon who and what you're dealing with, but I think everyone has their own approach to things. I think some people are similar obviously, but the way I would approach a situation would be completely different to the way [name of partner] would. He'll go in hard and fierce, whereas I'll try and talk first....If you go in and say, 'you, shift now' then I think that gets people's backs up straightaway" (PCSO Jameson, Interview 6, p7).

> "I do think people have different approaches for different people. With certain groups of youths, I'll try and take a more relaxed approach, talking to them, trying to get on the same level as them sometimes. Then again, you have to be able to switch it on if you need to get more heavy handed if they're being abusive or ignoring what you're asking. Some people prefer to go in like that in the first place but often there's not much point coming down hard on them [young people] all of the time as you'll never get anywhere" (PCSO Elliot, Interview 10, p3).

However the ability to utilise this approach effectively relies upon the confidence of individual PCSOs to engage and their ability to communicate, negotiate and persuade individuals into complying with their wishes. Adopting a befriending approach and a procedural justice style of policing enhances the capacity of PCSOs of securing legitimacy and therefore compliance. Communication, particularly the power of persuasion, was clearly identified by PCSO Lowe as a valuable method towards compliance;

> "A softly, softly approach is what you need, not a gung ho gut reaction. Some [young people] you can talk to but others you'll never get anywhere so it helps to know those who you're dealing with, then going with what you think will get them to come around to what you want them to do" (PCSO Lowe, Observation B12, p6).

Young people are therefore more likely to respect PCSO requests for compliance when adopting a befriending approach and when treated with a level of discretion and respect (Tyler, 2006, Hough et al, 2010). Unlike Professional PCSOs who tend to favour the befriending approach due to its reliance upon persuasion and negotiation and its potential for engagement, Disillusioned PCSOs tend to favour the befriending approach for two reasons. First, adopting a more authoritative approach has the potential of increasing conflict and increases the threat to their personal safety because for the most part, they are unable to enforce. Second, their disillusionment with the role and its purpose means that they are primarily concerned with

avoiding trouble and making the job as hassle-free as possible. The befriending approach is not only less likely to be met with challenges to legitimacy and hostility but is more likely to encourage legitimacy and compliance (Tyler and Huo, 2002, Tyler, 2004, 2006, Crawford, 2008).

Professional PCSOs who adopt this approach tend to incorporate a wider role definition than both Disillusioned and Frustrated PCSOs. Incorporating the roles of social worker, housing officer, youth welfare officer and educator, Professional PCSOs like PCSO Slater below, favour the befriending approach due to its potential for information sharing towards enforcement;

> "We do try and befriend them because it keeps us on good relations as they're dying to tell us [information] sometimes, but then again, they don't know our tactics. I just walked round the corner, called for a cop to get the drink from them, but they don't always put two and two together and realise it was us that called the cop down in the first place" (Observation A13, p3).

In adopting such an approach, Professional PCSOs try to tackle anti-social behaviour by encouraging the young person to consider the consequences of their actions and the implications of their offending rather than favouring the use of enforcement. Whilst not forgetting their membership within the police organisation, young people positively set those PCSOs who adopt a befriending approach apart from their fully sworn colleagues. PCSOs who adopt a befriending approach, demonstrate procedural fairness and take a measured approach to discretion are more likely to secure respect and legitimacy from those whom they seek compliance (Tyler, 2004, 2006, Hough et al, 2010). By utilising a befriending approach and setting themselves apart from police officers and the use of coercion, Professional PCSOs were often able to generate a greater sense of mutual obligation with young people that not only encouraged compliance following a specific encounter, but were also more likely to have a positive impact on future anti-social behaviour of the young person concerned. This observation contradicts conclusions made by Mastrofski, Snipes and Supina (1996, 296)

who identified a negative correlation between familiarity and compliance. This was demonstrated during the following conversation between PCSO Carruthers and a young person in the first case study area. Although intoxicated, the PCSO tried to encourage the young person concerned to amend her behaviour;

> PCSO Carruthers – "We don't want your ABA to go any further so just try and keep the noise down and be sensible about it"
>
> YP – "I will. I've been good the last few weeks haven't I?
>
> PCSO Carruthers – "I know you have. It just needs to stay that way!
>
> YP – "Aye it will....you know we were talking before that we're gonna get two T-shirts. Black, with community support officer on the back and a smiley face on the front with [name of area] finest written underneath. You two [PCSOs] are cush man, not moving us for least thing, like the others do. That [name of NPO] is a right pain, just like the rest of them. We've all had coppers push us to the floor for nowt" (Observation, A25, p7).

In some cases, particularly where officers had built a rapport with young people, PCSOs intentionally aimed to distinguish themselves from the police in order to maintain relations, encourage compliance and ultimately exert control, as illustrated by the following comment made by PCSO Jameson;

> "Well, you know we [PCSO Jameson and PCSO Slater] always try to look out for you but you've got to stop hanging around in big groups drinking and making the noise you do. They're [the police] looking towards ASBOs so they know what's going on, so I'm just warning you. I know none of you want that" (Observation, A13, p6).

Whilst such tactics separate PCSOs from the organisation, they enable PCSOs to gather intelligence and assist the neighbourhood policing team to

exert greater control over young people and where necessary, enforce anti-social behaviour. Using their ability to call upon the police to support their requests for compliance, however, has to be carefully managed and not used as an empty threat if PCSOs are to maintain any sense of credibility, as the following excerpts suitably illustrate;

> "We don't have much to start with. Being able to use your discretion is all well and good, but the thing is you've got to make it clear that I'm doing it not because I'm in a good mood, but as a first warning, and I'll get them nicked if they break the law and that is that. It's hard sometimes getting that across when you're trying to take a friendly approach so you can get information, but at the same time that you're not a pushover" (PCSO Clark, Observation B21, p10).

> "We don't want to burn our bridges and come down too hard cos we'd lose any information coming through, but we don't want them to think they can get away with how they're behaving" (PCSO Carruthers, Observation A20, p5).

Reflecting the approach of Wilson's (1968) 'service style' officer and Reiner's (1978) 'bobby', those PCSOs preferring the befriending approach also appreciated the importance of adopting a graduated approach in responding to disorder and anti-social behaviour principally in order to avoid conflict and retaliation (Norris, 1986, Tedeshi and Felson, 1994). Adopting a staged response might also be used by sworn officers as a means of encouraging compliance but they, unlike PCSOs, can be reassured by their ability to rely on the law and their use of legitimate force if necessary. Matching their approach with the limitations of their role is therefore paramount in PCSO efforts to exert control and establish order. This was clearly articulated by the following excerpts from interviews with PCSO Slater and PCSO Fisher;

> "I always start off low because if you go in low, you can always hit higher, but if you go higher you can't come down. That's our best shot

anyway, talking to them, try to calm it down without provoking them further cos we're limited in what we can do. If it doesn't work then you can step it up and get a cop down" (Interview with PCSO Slater, p12).

"The main thing is you've got to pick the right level to go in at. Cos at the end of the day if they're pissed up and you go in all guns blazing then it'll only get worse and what have you got to deal with it...you can't go in all nice 'please, please' cos you'll get nowhere....The biggest problem is managing the fact that we've got no authority and everyone knows that" (Interview with PCSO Fisher, p1).

Thus, the lack of authority within the PCSO role becomes apparent when the befriending approach fails and young people fail to comply. In such circumstances PCSOs have little option other than to threaten to or call upon the authority of their police officer colleagues to resolve conflict. The impact of using procedural based strategies by PCSOs upon their perceived legitimacy compliance is therefore mitigated by the limited authority within the PCSO role and the limited capacity of PCSOs to enforce. Inability to act in the event of non-compliance therefore not only prevents PCSOs from exercising control, but serves to undermine the legitimacy of PCSOs from the perspective of those misbehaving, from bystanders or those informed of their failure to act through word of mouth, as articulated by PCSO Jameson;

"You want to show them that what they're doing isn't acceptable but at the same time it's as if you're saying, 'well I can't handle this myself so I'm gonna get a real cop down who knows what they're doing and have the powers to see it through'... So, I'd only do it I knew for a fact that one of the NPOs was available or if that threat would be enough to get them into line. Otherwise, you'll do more damage than good" (PCSO Jameson, Observation A20, p4).

Whilst the majority of PCSOs clearly felt that adopting a befriending approach was preferable to a more authoritative approach due to their limited

capacity to enforce and therefore exercise authority, there were clear examples where the befriending approach failed when dealing with some young people and adults. This was certainly the case during a situation whereupon myself and PCSO Lowe stumbled across a group of over thirty youths drinking whilst on patrol,

> PCSO Lowe spoke to a few of the young people by name asking them what they had been up to ... As we were with this group on one side of the street, someone threw an empty bottle of vodka from the other side of the street, smashing at our feet. Soon after [name of NPO] arrived and upon seeing the car the young people scattered, with a sizable majority escaping through an alleyway to the other side of a high wall surrounding the estate. Whilst PCSO Lowe briefed [name of NPO] on what had taken place, the group on the other side of the wall began to throw stones at us.... in trying to get those most drunk out of the area [name of NPO] urged the friends of these young people to 'get them the f*** out of here or you'll all be arrested'. The young people, emboldened by the alcohol, continued to provoke [name of NPO] to respond and more stones were thrown from beyond the wall....PCSO Lowe and [name of NPO] pursued them. A few minutes later [PCSO Lowe and name of NPO] emerged from the other side of the wall, with [name of NPO] holding onto a teenage boy and [name of PCSO] escorting a teenage girl to the van. After both were inside the van, three additional police cars arrived. Fuelled by the increasing hostility, the police officers chased two young people who had congregated in the area and were openly abusing the police, physically apprehended them and placed them into the van. The scene evolved as an absolute rejection of authority both for all involved (Observation B12, p4).

Frustrated with their limited ability to enforce the law and the limitations of utilising craft skills of communication, negotiation and persuasion, some PCSOs tended to adopt a more authoritative, less discretionary approach in the first instance in an effort to exert their authority. Less empathetic to the circumstances surrounding anti-social behaviour or disorder, PCSOs

favouring more authoritative approach tended to fall within the category of the Frustrated PCSO. Endorsing the police occupational culture to a greater extent than the Professional or Disillusioned PCSO, Frustrated PCSOs were particularly discouraged by the limited authority within their role and their limited ability to engage in enforcement. The following observation made by PCSO Sparks and PCSO Brooks when dealing with a repeated incident of anti-social behaviour illustrates the extent of their frustration with the limited authority within their role;

> "I've got to admit I think I'm a bit heavy handed in this job. I think I'd be suited to having extra powers cos I'm sick of people taking the mick out of me. When I get in I tell you, I'm just gonna say 'gas' or 'baton', it's up to you" (PCSO Sparks, Observation A11, p2).

> We approached a group of approximately fifteen youths congregating on a field in [name of area]. They had been told not to do so by both PCSOs and NPOs due to the disturbance this was creating for nearby residents. PCSO Brooks was in no mood to try and persuade them to move and called over to them from the opposite side of the grass, "Right, that's it. Get off the field. You've been told. I'm in no mood for your excuses so if you don't I'm getting [name of NPO] down and he can do you for a public order offence" (PCSO Brooks, Observation A22, p4).

As illustrated above, the authoritative approach does not involve the same graduated approach to enforcement as adopted in the befriending approach, but instead leads to PCSOs drawing upon the authority of police officers at a much earlier stage. Faced with challenges to their legitimacy and feelings powerless in confronting abuse, Frustrated PCSOs would exaggerate their ability to enforce as a means of conveying greater authority, as demonstrated within the following observations;

> Young person – "Youse aren't even proper police so why should we care? You're pretendy police!" Immediately riled by this affront to her

> authority, PCSO Sparks barked, “No we’re not right so don’t get cheeky. We do the same role, I can still have you nicked so don’t even go there or you’ll regret starting with me”.
> The girl, unprepared for this response, tried to defend what she said, “I wasn’t but you should tell us what’s the difference between all of you”. PCSO Sparks resumed her assault, “Why do you need to know if you’re not doing anything wrong? All you need to know is to have a little respect for other people. We’ve had complaints and I’m just asking you to think about other people for once” (Observation A28, p5).
>
> Young person 1– “Here, are you gonna arrest him cos he’s been pinching?
>
> Young person 2 –“Nah, he can’t, he’s just a plastic. They’ve got no handcuffs”.
>
> PCSO Spencer smirked at them and replied, “Look, I can arrest you if I want, I don’t need handcuffs for that. It’s up to you not to give me a reason to so don’t push it” (Observation A9, p1).

Such officers tended to use little discretion when dealing with underage drinking, had little patience when requesting young people to move on, and as a result tended to express more vociferous resentment against young people. However, reliance upon the more authoritative approach was often counterproductive due to the perception amongst young people that this authority was unfounded and that any sanctions or threats for enforcement were dependent on police officers to execute. Those PCSOs who adopted a more authoritative approach in the first instance when dealing with young people risked being seen as having less credibility and legitimacy than those adopting a more befriending approach.

Young People, Discretion and Enforcement

There is widespread agreement within studies of police work that officers operating at street level occupy the highest levels of discretion within

the police organisation (Bittner, 1967, Holdaway, 1977, Waddington, 1999). Despite limitations in powers, the opportunities for discretion are ever more pronounced for PCSOs due to their focus on disorder and anti-social behaviour and the associated ambiguity of such offences (Chatterton, 1995, Singer 2004, Squires 2006) and the lack of bureaucratic control and supervision. Indeed, a number of PCSOs identified that PCSOs are able to exercise a greater level of discretion than police constables since constables are less able to devote the time to the informal resolutions of problems (Skolnick and Fyfe 1994) and are more likely to be more legalistic in their decision making (Wilson, 1968).

This wide scope for discretion enables PCSOs to focus their efforts on controlling those who threaten the safety and security of the respectable, i.e. the young and the anti-social. Observations of PCSOs whilst on patrol provided clear evidence of the importance of discretionary freedom as a means of control, as identified in the example below;

> We headed in the direction of the local off licence to check for underage drinking and upon turning onto the relevant street we heard a group of young people swearing and shouting loudly in the street. One teenage boy objected to the fact that the PCSOs were not responding to this as anti-social behaviour.
>
> Teenage Boy – “Are you gonna do them for a Section 5 then? You’d give us one so they should get the same?”
>
> Neither PCSO replied.
>
> Once out of earshot of the group PCSO Sparks told me, “It’s not worth it. He’s [the young person above] a nasty piece of work. What he fails to realise is that he mightn’t get one if he wasn’t involved in all other stuff so we nick him for that (anti-social behaviour) as well.
>
> PCSO Spencer added, “If we did that we might as well charge half the kids in [name of area]! (Observation A22, p6).

However, studies in the use of discretion by sworn officers (Ericson, 1987, Chatterton, 1995, Bowling and Foster, 2002) have identified the potential counterproductive impact of the over-use of discretion upon consensus and community relations. In order to gather intelligence and avoid alienating themselves from local communities and bolster perceptions of legitimacy, PCSOs must ensure they strike a balance between exerting control and satisfying the expectations of the respectable on the one hand and maintaining relations with young people to enable future co-operation and information sharing on the other. PCSOs must therefore demonstrate their ability to use their discretion fairly and professionally if they are to maintain relations with young people and avoid the escalation of conflict. This tension is demonstrated in the following example involving PCSO Slater;

> Whilst PCSO Slater was talking, one of the boys started to scratch the staircase to the upper flat of the property we were standing outside with a key. Instead of reacting authoritatively she warned, “That wouldn’t be criminal damage you’re doing would it? He looked at her blankly showing no remorse or embarrassment. Evidently not seeing the value in pursuing the issue further PCSO Slater said, ‘Ok, time’s up. You’re going to have to move from here. Why don’t you go to [name of teenage girl]’s house until the rain stops?” (Observation A13, p10).

The need to balance control with maintaining relations resulted in the majority of PCSOs utilising a high level of discretion in their dealings with young people, for example, in deciding whether to issue stop forms, conduct persons checks and/or request young people to ‘move on’. Supporting the work of Bittner (1967) concerning the management of conflict by police officers, PCSOs recognised the established norms of an area as an important factor in their decision to intervene since undue authoritative action could result in increased hostility amongst those concerned and within the wider community. To avoid conflict with young people, there were times when PCSOs utilised discretion in confiscating alcohol if young people were willing to move to an area where they would not cause a disturbance. The

example below involving PCSO Fisher demonstrates the difficulty of maintaining a balance between exerting control and maintaining relations;

> PCSO Fisher - “You can pour the rest of that can out but you can keep the rest as long as you don’t open them here”...The group seemed complied with her request. In order to assert her authority, PCSO Fisher added, “As long as you know we’ll be out and about tonight so keep them closed okay?” The group groaned but assured PCSO Fisher they would. When out of earshot of the group, PCSO explained her decision, “At the minute I’m being told to f*** off if I try and be less tolerant and since there’s nothing else I can do I’m trying a different tack. I doubt they’ll leave them unopened but at least this way they might be more inclined to talk to me in the future” (Observation B27, p4).

Although PCSOs were encouraged by the organisation to adopt a zero tolerance approach to underage drinking, the majority of PCSOs favoured a more discretionary approach to the problem. Whilst a more authoritative, zero tolerance approach might prevent underage drinking in the short term, it is more likely to provoke increased hostility between PCSOs and young people and an unwillingness to engage with PCSOs in the future. As a consequence of their restricted authority and in an effort to maintain relations with young people, both Professional PCSOs and Disillusioned PCSOs nearly always made attempts to engage with and persuade young people into compliance in the first instance, only calling for assistance and adopting a more authoritative approach when compliance was not forthcoming. Adopting a befriending approach however potentially led to the rejection of the force policy of zero tolerance, particularly when dealing with large groups of intoxicated young people. In order to exert control, there were occasions when PCSOs turned a blind eye to underage drinking on the condition that those involved kept noise at a minimum and didn’t cause a disturbance. This approach had the additional benefit of enabling PCSOs to monitor their behaviour more closely than if they had adopted a more legalistic, zero tolerance approach. This control tactic was used by PCSO Elliot and PCSO Wilson in response to a large group of underage drinkers;

> We approached the perimeter of the estate and PCSO Elliot spotted a group of about thirty teenagers drinking. As we approached we could see a sizeable proportion of them were already drunk and others were drinking to achieve the same ends...half of the group ran on sight of the PCSOs...The group was not particularly hostile to the PCSOs... Both PCSOs patiently spoke to the group about their plans for the afternoon. While it was clear that very few had any respect for their authority they did seem to respect them more as individuals...PCSO Wilson encouraged them to move to a nearby park where they were less likely to disturb residents. After a few protests and efforts to persuade them to move by the PCSOs by using their alcohol as a bargaining tool, they began to move. Both PCSOs followed the group at a distance to ensure they were doing as directed. PCSO Wilson explained, "I've got a short fuse today, I really can't be bothered with chasing them around. Sometimes it's best if we know where they are as we can monitor them better. Besides they do realise we're trying to meet them half way" (Observation B30, p3).

The measured use of discretion and the adoption of procedural justice principles of fairness and respect can therefore enable individual PCSOs to engage with and secure respect and legitimacy from young people even when those concerned do not recognise the legitimacy of the role and/or the demands being made (Weber, 1968, Tyler, 2006). Clearly, whilst young people might perceive being moved on or having their alcohol confiscated as unfair, they are more likely to comply with requests for compliance if they are treated fairly, if discretion is used and they given the opportunity to express their views (Crawford, 2008).

Relations between young people and those PCSOs tending to adopt an authoritative zero tolerance approach were markedly more hostile than between those adopting a more discretionary befriending approach. Failure to utilise discretion was not only counterproductive to compliance and therefore control, but suppressed further engagement. As demonstrated in the incident below, those PCSOs who exercise discretion and make efforts to

communicate rather than confront young people were more likely to invoke compliance than those who did not (Tyler, 2004).

> Young person - “Well, we’re not making any noise. We’re just chillin”
>
> PCSO Jameson - “I know you’re keeping it down, but you can’t stay here long. It’s too noisy for the people upstairs”
>
> PCSO Preston disappeared around a corner causing one of the young to protest, “See, what did I tell you? He’s calling the cops when we haven’t done anything. We’ll move for you [PCSO Jameson] but we’re not moving for him cos he’s just having a go for no reason, as per usual” (Observation, A15, p5).

Whilst PCSOs do exert control over young people in their efforts to protect the interests of the respectable, their limited authority unavoidably leads them to depend upon fully sworn officers to establish control and enforce the law. Tending to contact NPOs in the first instance, PCSOs were frequently in a position whereby they were aware that young people had alcohol on their person, often concealed under clothing, but were unable to search the young person to retrieve it. PCSO Wilson explained her reaction to such a predicament following such an encounter;

> “We know they’ve got drink and cigarettes on them and even though some of them are 16, some of them aren’t. But they also know that there’s not a thing we can do about it except get a cop down and that isn’t always possible. It’s frustrating at times cos you feel awful having to get a cop down for it when it’s blatantly obvious they’ve got it. It wastes their time that they could be spending on more important things and it makes us look useless at the same time” (Observation B15, p3).

Since this time, PCSOs within the force concerned have been awarded the power to conduct a consensual search for cigarettes and alcohol. However, this additional power does not avoid the dependency on NPOs in the event of non-compliance. Unable to draw upon coercive force and the available ‘battery charges’ of the police officer to encourage compliance (Skolnick,

1966, Punch, 1977, Bittner, 1978) and lacking powers of detention until the arrival of a constable (Singer, 2004), PCSOs are dependent upon police officers to exert control when incidents fall beyond their remit, when their efforts to exert authority fail and when their legitimacy is challenged.

Summary

This chapter has argued that PCSOs do not seek to deliver reassurance equally to communities. In response to limited public support, limited willingness to engage and challenges to their legitimacy from certain sections of the public, PCSOs direct their efforts towards reassuring the vulnerable and the respectable in a bid to gain legitimacy and credibility. In protecting the interests of these sections of the community and to give meaning to their role, PCSOs inevitably direct their efforts towards controlling the young and anti-social.

Operating in the interests of the respectable however is problematic due to restrictions imposed by their role. Firstly, their remit for community engagement and their limited capacity for enforcement prevent PCSOs from satisfying public demands in terms of controlling the young and the anti-social. The legitimacy of PCSOs and their capacity to reassure is therefore ultimately dependent upon the authority of neighbourhood police officers. Secondly, PCSOs are required to engage with the young people for the purposes of intelligence gathering in order to satisfy the crime control demands of the organisation. PCSOs must therefore, contrary to the interests of the respectable, exercise tolerance and discretion in their control of the young and the anti-social. Public expectations and the crime control ethos of the organisation are therefore diametrically opposed to their remit of engagement and reassurance.

Operating within a context of limited consensus and authority and drawing upon craft skills of communication, persuasion and negotiation, PCSOs adopt one of two approaches in their dealings with those they seek to control. The first approach – the befriending approach – is characterised by

high levels of discretion, engagement, the use of persuasion and negotiation to encourage compliance and a commitment to principles of procedural justice. The second approach – the authoritative approach – is adopted by PCSOs as a reaction to challenges to their legitimacy and/or frustration with the role. The authoritative approach is typically less discretionary, requires PCSOs to draw upon the authority of sworn officers at an earlier stage during interactions with the public and is therefore dependent upon the reciprocity and availability of fully sworn officers to support decision making and affect compliance. Driven by their limited authority, the majority of PCSOs favoured the use of the befriending approach for its increased potential for intelligence gathering, and once relations have been built, for compliance. These findings reinforce observations made by Tyler and Huo (2002), Tyler (2006), Crawford (2008) and Hough et al, (2010) regarding the potential positive benefits of procedural based policing upon police legitimacy and compliance. Whilst Frustrated PCSOs are more likely to adopt the authoritative approach in the first instance due to their eagerness to engage in crime control activities, Professional and Disillusioned PCSOs tend to do so only when their efforts to befriend and persuade fail.

Individual PCSOs who are able to cope with hostility and challenges to their legitimacy, who succeed in developing craft skills conducive to engagement and are able to exercise good judgement and discretion in decision making, are able to overcome the limitations within their role and are more likely to secure legitimacy from those they seek to control. Despite working within communities of conflict and being dependent upon fully sworn officers to provide enforcement, PCSOs are, for the most part, able to reassure the ‘respectable’ and support organisational objectives of crime control through engagement, intelligence gathering and co-ordinating their activities with those of neighbourhood police officers.

Chapter 7 – Being a PCSO in the Police Organisation

Introduction

Having examined the development of PCSO identities, skill development and the construction of a PCSO craft in Chapter 5 and the challenges experienced by PCSOs in delivering reassurance and tackling anti-social behaviour and disorder in Chapter 6, this chapter explores the deployment and integration of PCSOs within the organisation. In so doing, the chapter explains how PCSOs have become a resource for crime control as opposed to a mechanism for the delivery of reassurance as a result of the pressure imposed by both the occupational and organisational performance culture.

Faced with the growing pressure to respond to high crime rates of the 1990s, demonstrate value for money and improve public confidence (Garland, 1996, 2001, McLaughlin, 2007), police forces have increasingly been evaluated in terms of their success in delivering crime control. Despite variations in definition, crime control can be seen to encapsulate all measures developed to prevent, detect and control crime (Stenson, 1991, Innes, 2003). Performance indicators for crime control include crime detection and prevention, investigation, clear up rates and responsiveness to citizen requests for service. Whilst order maintenance and service functions (EriPCSOn, 1987) remain central to consensus (Brogden 1982), the introduction of managerialist principles and performance indicators within policing have prioritised crime control functions but undermined service functions of the police (Waddington, 1999, Wakefield, 2007). Foot patrol and community engagement, no longer seen as the ‘backbone’ of policing have been downgraded in status and replaced by a rhetoric of specialism and professionalism geared towards crimefighting and control (Reiner 2000, Loader and Mulcahy, 2003). Whilst partnership working is a principal aspect of the police reform agenda (Crawford, 1997, Newburn, 2003b) and police forces are facing increasing pressure towards more ethical, sensitive policing following claims of institutional racism and discrimination (Neyroud, 2003,

Rowe, 2007), such commitments are overridden by the demands of the performance culture. Organisational pressures derived from performance indicators, particularly emphasis upon crimefighting, encourages officers to endorse the traditional police culture and the development of a sense of mission whilst discouraging efforts towards community oriented policing.

An inevitable tension therefore occurs between emphasis on performance in terms of crime control (Chan 1997, Paoline, 2003, Loftus, 2008) and the restricted capacity of PCSOs to feed into crime control activities due to their non-confrontational role. The negative reactions of sworn officers and the Police Federation to the introduction of PCSOs (Loveday, 2005, Paskell, 2006, Caless, 2007) are indicative of this tension (Caless, 2007). This chapter argues that the pressures of the performance culture and emphasis upon crime fighting within the police culture has led to a blurring of the PCSO role that has had both a negative and positive effect; negative in the sense that such blurring detracts PCSOs away from their rationale of reassurance and engagement, and positive in the sense that their greater involvement in crime control activity acts to support integration within the organisation.

This chapter is structured into three sections. The first section argues that the PCSO role, rather than being driven by reassurance, has been interpreted as a means of informing crime control objectives and the wider performance culture. Efforts towards engagement and reassurance are ultimately superseded by demands of crime control. The second section argues that the pull of the performance culture is such that PCSOs are increasingly deployed in activities that cause them to step outside their role and towards the remit of a police officer. This not only leads to PCSOs becoming utilised as a reactive resource, but causes them to be placed in situations that they are not equipped to deal and where their safety is at risk. The third section argues that the tensions between the PCSO role and the expectations held by regular officers for PCSOs to feed into crime control objectives impacts upon how PCSOs are perceived in the organisation and their relationships with regular officers. The integration of PCSOs is dependent upon their ability to support the mission of crime control and

therefore to satisfy the performance culture. Those PCSOs who embrace the crime control ethos of the organisation are better able to support regular officers and report higher levels of integration within neighbourhood policing teams than those who are less inclined to do so.

Section 1 - The Blurring of the PCSO Role: The Pull of the Performance Culture

This section examines the ways in which neighbourhood policing teams across the two case study areas have deployed PCSOs. Rather than being deployed according to their rationale of reassurance and community engagement, PCSOs are increasingly deployed to support the work of regular officers towards satisfying objectives of crime control. Direction from senior officers to engage in reassurance and engagement is framed within the purpose of securing intelligence to support crime control and is only pursued in the absence of crime control activity. There is therefore an unambiguous emphasis placed on crime control in the deployment and direction of PCSOs to which PCSOs must feed into if they are to satisfy the demands of supervision and become integrated into the organisation.

Beyond generic guidance from ACPO (ACPO, 2002) stipulating that PCSOs should only engage in duties that are solely related to their primary role of reassurance, police forces received very limited guidance from the government concerning PCSO deployment or the achievement of reassurance. Instead, Chief Constables were given operational freedom in determining how PCSOs they might best be utilised to support operational demands. With the exception of providing BCUs with a standardised role outline and endorsing PCSOs with limited powers of enforcement, the Chief Constable of the force in which this study was conducted gave area commanders full autonomy in determining PCSO duties and activities.

In the absence of corporate direction, PCSO deployment was driven in the first instance by a desire for PCSOs to support police performance and to free up fully sworn officers from tasks that did not require full powers of

enforcement, rather than towards reassurance. Some area commanders adopted a narrow role definition of PCSOs placing emphasis on their ability to provide targeted visibility, whilst others, such as those in the first case study area, were more imaginative in deploying PCSOs to support problem solving efforts and the enforcement of anti-social behaviour. Either way, deployment was fundamentally driven by crime control objectives.

Whilst area commanders provide sergeants with general instruction and direction for PCSO deployment, PCSO activities are ultimately determined by police sergeants and neighbourhood police officers responsible for their day to day management and supervision. Learning how best to deploy PCSOs was often determined by the skills and attributes of individual PCSOs and the extent to which activities could be constructed as falling within the PCSO role. The following excerpt, taken from a discussion with two neighbourhood police officers working in the second case study area, suggests that the operational freedom granted to neighbourhood police teams can lead to PCSOs becoming employed in tasks associated with crime control rather than their primary role of reassurance;

> NPO1 – “Aye [name] you know you didn’t have a clue what they were supposed to be doing did you?”
>
> NPO2 – “Well, no. Half of it was getting to learn what their strengths were as people and then as things came up just seeing whether it fit into the role or not. Some areas used them for crime reports and mobile patrols and such, but we didn’t think that quite cut it” (Observation B12, p6).

Reflecting the work of Skolnick (1966) in relation to the pressure to produce experienced by police officers, crime control objectives and the performance culture consistently informed PCSO deployment and the co-ordination of activities between PCSOs and neighbourhood police officers (NPOs) within the case study force. As such, PCSOs are utilised as an additional resource to improve the performance of the wider neighbourhood policing team in terms of crime control rather than the delivery of reassurance. Dedicated patrols conducted by PCSOs in local communities

provide access to local knowledge and intelligence that is often inaccessible to police officers. As demonstrated in the following excerpts, intelligence gathered whilst on patrols can enable PCSOs to directly support performance indicators by facilitating arrests (Millie and Herrington 2003);

> "We do pick up a good deal more information than the cops actually do, but at the same time the cops have their little touts and other outlets they can go to for information. Theirs is an easier pick up than ours. I'm not saying we work harder for ours, but we're actually on foot getting into the nooks and crannies, seeing things that they can't get to in their cars. We often see or hear what they don't and that gives another dimension to the information we get" (Interview with PCSO Sparks, p13).

> "I had a description of the kid we suspected was responsible [for an attempted burglary], so when I saw him walking towards me alarm bells rang....All I had to do was ask him to stop and to tell him he met a description of a suspect and he blurted out, "I didn't mean to break the handle!" It was so funny. He knew he had given himself away" (PCSO Wilson, Observation B25, p1).

> "There are loads of things that we can do as PCSOs but they [local commanders] want us to support the team and improve their performance. The best way we can do that is by being out on the streets and bringing back information so they can take action and make arrests or by doing some of the work that ties them up so they can deal with more serious issues. So, that's what we focus on doing" (PCSO Fisher, Interview 9, p5).

The contribution of PCSOs in supporting arrests through intelligence gathering and identifying suspects whilst on patrol was immediately recognised by NPOs and neighbourhood sergeants, informing the direction of PCSO deployment. In the absence of a dedicated supervisor, responsibility for the direction of PCSOs is shared between sergeants and NPOs. In some cases individual NPOs were responsible for PCSO supervision on a semi-permanent basis however, PCSOs tended to be

supported by the NPO(s) on duty during each shift. Faced with the pressure of the performance culture, PCSOs were often directed to patrol areas of NPO responsibility at the expense of their own. PCSO Jameson below clearly identifies the determining role played by the performance culture upon PCSO deployment;

> "What's the point in me going there? [NPOs area of responsibility]. I don't know any of the faces and I'll do more harm than good. He [NPO as acting sergeant] wants us to come down hard on the people causing the trouble there so it's pointless me going in the first place. It's only cos it's his area and he wants it targeted and if I'm working with [name of Special Constable] he might be able to get his figures up" (PCSO Jameson, Observation A21, p2).

Despite emphasis upon community engagement within neighbourhood policing policy (Home Office, 2008, 2010) observations of NPOs within the station suggest that the pull of the traditional crime fighting ethos of police work continues to shape officer orientations to work. With the exception of one or two individuals within each case study area who maintained a community focus to their work, NPOs prioritised the pursuit of 'real police work' (Sadd and Grinc, 1994 and Skogan and Hartnett, 1997) driven by crime control objectives. PCSO Slater explained this imbalance towards enforcement within the team;

> "[name of NPO] is the only community focused NPO. The rest of them take the piss out of him cos he cares about that side of things even those they no longer have dedicated areas [of crime] of responsibility...[name of NPO] is still committed because it's become part of the job for him. I mean he does the job and still gets the arrests, even more than some of the others. Yes, he mightn't be out on the streets as much but he gets his arrests from intelligence he gains and has relationships to support more in the future" (PCSO Slater, Observation A25, p8).

As a result, even when PCSOs are deployed for the purposes of community engagement and reassurance, such needs were nearly always secondary

concerns to those associated with the detection, control and enforcement of crime and disorder. This is clearly articulated PCSO Spencer in describing the her involvement in a situational crime prevention initiative;

> "It was good doing it [crime prevention initiative] as it brought some variety, but when we were doing the 4-12pm shift they [supervision] reckoned we should be looking to twenty properties a night per PCSO....I don't think they'd [supervision] realised how time consuming it could be especially when they wanted us to do everything else, patrol places, sort out the kids drinking and respond to jobs on top" (PCSO Spencer, Observation A19, p9).

Tensions frequently occurred between NPOs and PCSOs when crime prevention initiatives led to PCSOs spending time in the station or at community events rather than supporting crime control activities by being out on the street. An example of such friction is demonstrated in the following comment by PCSO Sparks regarding the development of a neighbourhood watch scheme in the first case study area;

> "With the neighbourhood watch scheme we're trying to get off the ground, it's not that the NPOs are against it, it's more to do with us being in the station when they expect us to be out on the street bringing stuff back" (PCSO Sparks, Observation A29, p3).

Working in an environment where enforcement is given primacy over engagement sends a direct message to PCSOs that their role and remit is not sufficiently valued by the organisation. PCSOs quickly learn that in order to be accepted by regular officers they must feed into the performance culture of the organisation by supporting these aims and defining their role in terms of crime control rather than reassurance. Reassurance is instead seen as a complementary outcome of crime control activity rather than a priority in its own right.

Section 2 - The Blurring of the PCSO Role: Working Beyond the Confines of the Role

Despite their remit for community engagement and reassurance, PCSOs are expected to feed into the performance culture of the organisation by gathering intelligence, identifying suspects and by responding to calls for service by members of the public. This expectation became evident to PCSOs from an early stage in their implementation. Despite being new to the role, PCSO Spencer explained how PCSO performance is measured in relation to crime control rather than reassurance;

> "I'd only been in the job for five weeks when I was called in to discuss why I wasn't putting stop forms in for every encounter, why I wasn't doing radio checks as often as they wanted. I mean it takes a little time to get used to the job and develop the confidence you need....But it's just that sense that they're only concerned with judging what you do in that way, how it might lead to arrests and what have you" (PCSO Spencer, Observation A4, p1).

Indeed, whilst there was variation across the two sites and specific performance measures were not uniformly implemented across the force area, it became clear throughout the research that PCSOs were increasingly required to record their activities and contribution towards crime control. The increasing practice of logging PCSO activities was explained by a neighbourhood sergeant working within the second case study area as a mechanism for achieving recognition for their work within the organisation;

> "We're going to formalise what you're doing a little more so you get the recognition you deserve...I'm not going to bog you down with a load of paperwork as that would be pointless and prevent you from getting out and about...But it's important to get some structure to what you do" (Observation B24, p4).

PCSO measures of performance were however limited to crime control activities including for example the number of stops undertaken with young people, the amount of intelligence gathered and the volume of alcohol

confiscated. Whilst community engagement and reassurance is difficult to measure by such quantitative means, only cursory importance was attached to engagement, as measured by visits to community groups and schools, of which were not valued to the same degree as indicators intended to measure crime control. As demonstrated in the following excerpts, PCSOs did not always feel that the organisation recognised their efforts towards community engagement,

> "It's all well and good having a record of what we do, but the trouble is we speak to loads of people, in their homes and that, and make a point of going that extra mile, but there are no records for that. We're trying to make links with people who are less likely to work with us... but there is nothing to show for that" (PCSO Sparks, Observation A22, p3).

> "It's not as though we've got arrests or what have you to show our achievements cos the stuff we do can't be measured in the same way. It should be balanced to take into account the community stuff as well" (PCSO Wilson, Observation B20, p2).

Such overemphasis on performance management negatively impacted on reassurance and community engagement in two key ways. Firstly, monitoring of PCSO activities in such a way places additional pressure on PCSOs to be 'productive', as defined by sworn officers. A number of PCSOs expressed concern that this might cause some PCSOs to be less inclined to use their discretion and to become more legalistic in their decision making, as demonstrated within the following excerpt;

> "That's the way it's all heading. We're getting judged on the amount of stops we do, the number of incidents we go to. We're being pushed to go to low threes [type of incident] much more, three a day, but we don't even get that many through to us so you end up stopping people for the sake of it cos drinking can be counted as one incident. You could do that ten times in a couple of hours then sit back in the station and they'll think we've worked out backsides off" (PCSO Clark, Observation B5, p1).

A second, equally important issue is that the lack of precedence afforded to community aspects of the role discourages those PCSOs who identify with the service aspects of the role. The lack of recognition bestowed upon community aspects of the role was identified by PCSO Spencer who felt that his efforts to develop relations were largely ignored by the neighbourhood team and therefore the organisation,

> "I'm working on a couple of projects at the moment where I'm working very closely with residents and it's something to get my teeth into...it's not worth putting a PDR [personal development] entry in for but it's time consuming, ringing residents, filling in diary sheets, working with the Private Rented Project and YHN and it's not that far off what an NPO would do. But the thing I don't see is how that ever gets recorded but it's what we're supposed to be about" (Interview with PCSO Spencer, p15).

Whilst PCSO Spencer became cynical to the role due to the lack of value attached to engagement and reassurance, other Disillusioned PCSOs became cynical towards their role due to their limited authority and capacity to engage in crime control. As illustrated by PCSO below, PCSOs are often in a position whereby they are cannot process or pursue an incident to the extent that they would like. This is particularly challenging for Frustrated PCSOs since these limitations prevent their ability to feed into crime control efforts of the neighbourhood team, as PCSO Sparks explains;

> "It's frustrating when you can't take something a far as you'd like due to the NPOs on shift doing more priority jobs. You want to support what we doing as a team, but we can't always get involved in something if there are no NPOs to attend a scene or do a search if we need them to" (PCSO Sparks, Observation A11, p2).

Despite being awarded additional powers for controlling traffic and tackling under-age drinking in January 2008, PCSOs working in the second case study area felt that their contribution to crime control had remained unchanged. The lack of impact of these additional powers upon practice was

particularly frustrating for Frustrated PCSOs eager to become a police officer, as PCSO Brooks explains;

> "We can now direct traffic, put up road signs and issue fixed penalty notices for cycles on pavements but we can't force them to stop, so it makes you think 'what's the point?...We can ask for a consensual search, but we can only seize alcohol. We've been told we're not allowed to search for drugs or sharps [needles, knives]...we're not in any better position to support the cops. We're still toothless!" (PCSO Brooks, Observation B3, p2).

Whilst searching for drugs or knives has the potential to increase risk, there were many other activities, including house searches, undertaking crime reports and issuing notices to leave when dealing with youth disorder, that PCSOs felt would support their contribution towards crime control without incurring any greater risks. However, frustration with PCSO powers of enforcement and the capacity of PCSOs to contribute to crime control was not however limited to PCSOs. Both NPOs and reactive PCs frequently expressed frustration with PCSO powers and their restricted capacity to provide support, which, as illustrated by the examples below, were difficult for PCSOs to ignore;

> "The Inspector wants us to give tickets and confiscate bikes but I don't think he realises how difficult it is to do. He says, 'If you can't get the bike then get a NPO down'. [name of NPO] rolled his eyes as if to say 'yet another thing for us to respond to for them', as if we're as good as useless" (PCSO Sparks, Observation A22, p3).

> "When shift PCs ask what we do and we tell them they often say "is that it"? You can't even conduct searches? They look at you as if to say what a waste of money, we could've had another cop" (PCSO Jameson, Observation A12, p4).

As NPOs contend with a working environment infused with mangerialist principles, try to satisfy responsibilities for crime control, and face increased pressure to provide a more efficient service to the public,

senior officers look for ways to diversify PCSO deployment to better support NPOs. The scope for variation within the PCSO role and increasing organisational demands for PCSOs to free up resources ultimately leads to 'mission creep' (Caless, 2007) whereby PCSOs become progressively more involved in tasks characteristic of the remit of a police officer. Additional duties in which PCSOs become involved include constructing files for anti-social behaviour orders, managing public disorder, conducting test purchases of alcohol to tackle underage drinking and assisting in drugs raids. 'Mission creep' is also facilitated by control room operatives. Facing pressure to allocate calls for service with stretched police resources, PCSOs inevitably become involved in incidents falling outside their remit, as identified by PCSO Spencer below;

> As we were leaving the station another job came over the radio with regards to a 'rave' at a nearby property. Instead of calling over the radio to check for available officers the job was simply allocated to the PCSOs. [name of PCSO] remarked to me, "Is it any wonder we keep getting sent to jobs that really are outside our role when there's no-one else to give them to?" (PCSO Spencer, Observation A22, p1).

For the most part, the increasing 'mission creep' of the PCSO role is supported by PCSOs. For Frustrated PCSOs, mission creep provides increased opportunities for crime control and opportunities to 'imitate' police officers, whilst for both Professional and Disillusioned PCSOs it provides greater variation and value than that secured through their own role. However, mission creep has two dysfunctional outcomes. First, it serves to further divert PCSOs from reassurance and public engagement and hinders their ability to be distinctive in terms of identity and development of their own culture within the organisation. Greater involvement in activities falling under the remit of a police officer pushes PCSOs towards the working rules and occupational culture of police officers. Second, 'mission creep' can cause PCSOs to step outside their non-confrontational role and become involved in tasks that they are neither trained nor equipped to deal. Even if the activity does not appear to present immediate risks, PCSOs are frequently placed in situations of conflict. The account below documents the involvement of

PCSOs Elliot and Wilson in a drugs raid. Although neither PCSO entered the property concerned, they were nonetheless exposed to a heightened level of risk;

> As it approached 9.30am, PCSO Elliot and PCSO Wilson decided to prepare for the arrival of the NPOs. They located the number of the property in which the planned raid would take place and tried to look inconspicuous by patrolling the immediate area. Ben explained, “Once they’re [NPOs] in we’ll stop anyone from wandering in or running out....we get to see all of the action but can’t participate in the search unfortunately”...Although the block of flats in which the target property was surrounded by a wooden perimeter fence, the fence at the rear of the property was missing and therefore provided no opportunity to conceal our presence from those within. PCSO Wilson and I remained on the left side of the property whilst PCSO Elliot remained on the right. After the police had been in the property for a few minutes, a teenage girl escaped from the rear of the property to avoid the police. PCSO Wilson remarked, “I’m glad it was her. Imagine if we had to deal with a big bloke...[to PCSO Elliot] You’d have to wrestle him while I hit him with the garden gnome!” (Observation B16, p2).

All PCSOs were happy to provide operational support despite the potential increased risks to their safety. Their aspirations for greater variation and excitement and the opportunity to work alongside police officers led some, particularly Frustrated PCSOs, to volunteer to attend requests for service falling beyond their remit. The increased risk that PCSOs are exposed to due to mission creep and their desire for greater involvement in crime control activity is further highlighted in the following scenarios. In each account, PCSOs had willingly placed themselves at risk for the opportunity to engage in ‘real police work’ (Manning, 1977, Reiner, 2000).

> As we walked PCSO Jameson recalled a situation where herself and PCSOs Preston and Carruthers had been tasked to patrol [name of area] in the hope of sightings some suspects wanted for burglary. The PCSOs spotted one of the suspects, who, upon seeing the PCSOs,

ran away. PCSO Preston pursued him on foot, followed by PCSO Carruthers recording the sighting on the radio to provide back up. PCSO Jameson explained, “The NBMs had been out looking for this guy all week so I suppose they [PCSOs Preston and Carruthers] thought they couldn’t let him get away...I’d only been in the job eight weeks and I didn’t know what to do. So, I thought they’re running so that’s what I’ve got to do, but I was still thinking what exactly am I going to do if I do catch him. There’s no way I’ll be able to hold him”. I asked PCSO Jameson what would have happened if they had seized him. She replied, “Well, I asked PCSO Preston and he said, “Nothing, you wouldn’t have been in trouble. The team would’ve rallied behind us cos we’ve have done them a big favour” (Observation A6, p3).

PCSO Spencer and PCSO Sparks kept stopping whilst on patrol to listen to the communications room on the radio. The majority of calls were too serious for PCSOs to respond. However, on one occasion, [name of PCSO] decided to respond in the absence of other officers being available.

PCSO Sparks - “This one’s a violent domestic but it’s just round the corner. We’ll hang fire in the area and look from a distance. I usually remind them that I’ve got no powers but suggest that I’ll go and try and give more information. It makes sense cos some jobs that come in are over-graded so dispatch send a cop only to find that it’s not really as full on as you’d think and we could have maybe gone to suss it out first to save them [PCs] having to go” (Observation A19, p8).

As we climbed back up the hill to visit some hotspots for disorder a job came over the radio requesting the presence of an officer. Although the job was classified as a High 2 involving an altercation involving a large group of teenage boys and therefore was potentially confrontation, PCSO Brooks informed the communications room that

> they would respond at a distance to give support until officers could get to the scene (Observation B2, p2).

Despite PCSOs' remit for community engagement and the assertion within operational guidance that PCSOs should not conduct activities that do not satisfy their primary role of reassurance (ACPO, 2002, Northumbria Police, 2005), findings suggest that PCSOs are being deployed as a reactive resource, particularly during evening shifts when demands for service are higher. The deployment of PCSOs as a reactive resource to persistent disorder, vandalism and anti-social behaviour frequently detracts PCSOs from their remit of reassurance. Prior to the introduction of PCSOs, such calls for service were not prioritised by police officers. Since their introduction, control room operatives have been able to allocate such calls for service to PCSOs thereby considerably alleviating their workload and supporting performance targets (HMIC, 2001a, Innes, 2005). Whilst it is feasible that PCSOs are able to provide reassurance by responding to these incidents (Innes, 2003), acting as a reactive resource diverts them away from efforts to construct positive relations with the community and provides another means by which crime control objectives can assert their dominance. The capacity for PCSOs to alleviate pressures experienced by control room operators in managing demands for service by the public is demonstrated by the following excerpt;

> PCSO Elliot and PCSO Wilson received a request from the control room to respond to an incident of youth disorder. On arriving in the area we encountered no sign of disorder or evidence of vandalism as reported. The PCSOs patrolled the vicinity 'in order to be seen' by the resident who had made the report to demonstrate that the police had responded to their call and PCSO Elliot contacted the communications room to provide an update. As we walked away I asked PCSO Elliot why he had done so rather than updating the PNC once back at the station. He explained, "Usually if it's a quick job we'll do it on the radio. It means LB [communications operative] can make the update there

and then and close the incident to move onto the next job they've got to allocate" (Observation B13, p3).

Utilising PCSOs as a reactive resource signifies a return to traditional methods of policing detracting them from their primary role of reassurance. Calls for service are inevitably prioritised by the organisation, and in the absence of available officers to respond to calls, PCSOs provide an additional resource to be used. PCSOs in the first case study area clearly identified an expectation for PCSOs to prioritise calls for service over any plans for engagement or reassurance;

> "Here we go again", remarked PCSO Sparks, "last night all the disorder jobs got put on hold cos we were doing what we're supposed to be doing with residents [engagement],...it's the same old story of the sergeants wanting to pass all the rubbish onto us sending us right across the sector. I've said to residents that I'll be in the area but I haven't been able to go due to having to respond to jobs coming in. But you can't do anything about it as you're expected to respond when they come in" (Observation A23, p2).

> En route to relieving PCSO Preston from cordon duty, PCSOs Carruthers and Slater received a call on their radios in relation to youth disorder on [name of street]. PCSO Slater asked PCSO Carruthers, "Shall we pop in on that on the way down?'. PCSO Slater agreed, remarking, "That must have been on hold for a while cos it wasn't there before our break. It's a bit early for them to be kicking off but we'll suss it out as all the NPOs are tied up and we can't leave it" (Observation A25, p2).

As such, organisational demands to respond to calls for service are given greater prominence by the organisation than those associated with community relations. The expectation for PCSOs to respond to calls for service may benefit victims of crime and/or residents living within hotspot areas but has the counterproductive potential to negatively impact on

relations established with ‘respectable’ members of the public whom PCSOs seek to reassure. Not only are calls for service given greater priority but they are valued to a much greater extent by supervision and senior officers than PCSO efforts of engaging with the community. This is supported by the following account provided by PCSO Spencer during interview recalling his role in arresting a known offender,

> “All I’ll say about this particular incident is that it’s maybe given me more credibility from my supervisors...After it happened somebody was saying that the sergeant was doing cartwheels and that’s because catching that type of crime [theft from vehicle] and that type of person is ideal for them. It’s [the arrest] not necessarily something that I’m proud of as I shouldn’t have to feel that I have to do something like that [facilitating an arrest] to gain that. But it just shows what is and isn’t valued in the job” (Interview 5, p20).

The capacity for PCSOs to act as a reactive resource is however largely determined both by the nature of crime problems within target areas and by their capacity to respond to incidents due to their restricted mobility. In areas where crime problems greatly exceed those to which PCSOs can expect to respond, as found in the second study area to due to the greater potential for violence, PCSOs are less able to act as a reactive resource and therefore to participate in crime control activities. The provision of cycles, symptomatic of the organisation’s eagerness for PCSOs to be utilised reactively, has facilitated relative improvements in PCSOs capacity to respond to requests for service. However, PCSOs were in widespread agreement that their dedication to foot patrol, as required by the role, was incompatible with the organisation’s expectation for them to be utilised as a reactive resource, as demonstrated by the following accounts;

> A report of a neighbourhood dispute came over the radio requesting a PCSO to respond. PCSO Jameson said to PCSO Sparks, “Do you know that’s just short of [boundary of the sector]? It doesn’t make sense for us to go all the way over there when we’ll be expected to

> come back to [name of area as a hotspot] that'll take forever" (Observation B27, p8).
>
> We made our way to respond to a call relating to youth disorder. The call related to an area on the other side of the target area, a distance of almost about 2 miles. By the time we arrived, almost an hour after the call had been made, there was no evidence of any disorder and those responsible were nowhere in sight (Observation A22, p5).

Whilst supporting the organisation in responding to disorder, utilising PCSOs as a reactive resource is likely to fail to meet public expectations of policing since without the use of vehicles PCSOs are not sufficiently mobile to provide the level of service and efficiency required to improve levels of satisfaction.

As demonstrated by a wealth of research into community policing (Lurigio and Skogan, 1994, Rosenbaum et al, 1994, Skogan and Hartnett, 1997, Crawford et al, 2003), the prioritisation of reactive police work and police performance culture severely restrict the capacity of community police officers to dedicate time to engagement and community policing efforts. Whilst the PCSO role was designed specifically in order to avoid this shortcoming, PCSOs have also become prey to these same pressures. The potential of the PCSOs role to improve engagement with local communities is therefore being undermined by the operational demands of traditional crime fighting due to restricted resources and high workload of reactive officers in a similar way to that experienced by community officers highlighted in community policing studies. PCSOs, like their neighbourhood police officer colleagues, are also at the mercy of the control room due to organisational pressure to perform and produce, and increasing public demand for police services. Indeed, it would appear that aside from their limited training, the only obstacle preventing the deeper immersion of PCSOs into crime control activities is the continued reluctance of the Chief Constable to give PCSOs additional powers of enforcement.

Section 3 - Demonstrating Value within the Police Service

The previous section argued that due to an overwhelming emphasis upon performance indicators and crime control within the organisation PCSOs are increasingly expected to respond to calls for service and are experiencing mission creep. In examining PCSO relationships with NPOs and regular officers across both areas, this section argues that attitudes of fully sworn officers, working within and beyond neighbourhood policing teams, towards PCSOs are shaped by expectations of the capacity of PCSOs to feed into objectives of crime control. It is only when PCSOs are able to work alongside sworn officers and ultimately support front line police work that they become integrated into the organisation.

Integration within Neighbourhood Policing Teams

Findings suggest that PCSOs are providing a valuable supportive role within neighbourhood policing teams. Reciprocal relationships between PCSOs and NPOs occur specifically in relation to intelligence sharing, efforts to tackle underage drinking and anti-social behaviour, and prosecution through their role in supporting arrests. However, PCSOs are only valued within neighbourhood teams when they are feeding into crime control objectives. Much less precedence and value is subsequently attributed to PCSO efforts towards community engagement and reassurance. PCSOs who are able to feed into crime control efforts are more likely to enjoy higher levels of integration into the team and receive a greater sense of value, as suggested in the following quotes;

> "They do see us as part of the team...we'll come back [from patrol] and we'll say such and such is doing this and we saw such and such here. They'll then turn to us and say he's wanted, hang around there and keep an eye out. They'll help us when we're putting in statements, when we have a hunch and think something's suspicious, it's give and take....We're a team, I feel part of a team with them. I have no problem in giving them a shout on the radio and saying I've got this,

> can you come down...You're all working together for the same results" (Interview with PCSO Slater, p28).
>
> "What I always try to do is if there are arrests, we'll get them for them [NPOs]. I like to keep it in the team, keep it in the pot, so it is a team effort" (Interview with PCSO Clark, p24).
>
> "They're being held back by this force defining what they are about in terms of visibility that it's difficult to keep them challenged ....intelligence gathering is their biggest strength so we help them to capitalise on that to get the best possible outcomes for the team" (NPO Focus Group 2, p4).

The authority and operational support provided by NPOs in responding to PCSO requests for support is therefore only repaid by PCSOs when they are able to support NPOs in crime control and in meeting performance indicators.

Despite PCSOs limited capacity to feed into crime control activities of NPOs, a degree of solidarity existed between NPOs and PCSOs as a consequence of their shared experience of police work and a shared appreciation of the risks of policing communities of conflict (Reuss Ianni 1983). Their shared sense of danger (Skolnick, 1966), isolation from wider society and a distinct 'us and them' divide between NPOs and target communities encouraged the development of loyalty between PCSOs and NPOs. As illustrated in the previous chapter, PCSOs and NPOs construct similar classifications to those officers observed by Van Maanen (1974) in order to distance themselves from individuals perceived as police property. Working within communities of conflict, NPOs clearly empathised with the difficulties experienced by PCSOs in securing compliance, particularly from often hostile young people, as demonstrated by the following comments;

> "All of them know what it's like sometimes. It's horrible having to walk out when the kid's are in a volatile mood and you've got to deal with it, especially given that we've got little to work with. They [NPOs] wouldn't thank you for the position, so I think sometimes they're

appreciative of exactly what we've got to contend with" (Interview with PCSO Carruthers, p25).

"I don't envy them at all. Having to deal with the kids acting like idiots when all they've got is the radio if things don't go to plan, going out in all weathers especially when the streets are empty. I couldn't do the job" (NPO Focus Group 1, p3).

"They're out in all weathers, on their feet six to seven hours a day and if they do get stick they can't do much about it...If they'd had PCSOs before I became a copper I doubt I'd do the job no matter how much I wanted to join up" (NPO Focus Group 2, p2).

The nature and extent of threat in exerting authority within target communities not only lead to empathy but a strong sense of responsibility for the wellbeing of PCSOs amongst of NPOs. Attentive to the limited training received by PCSOs and the absence of personal protective equipment, NPOs had clearly impressed on PCSOs that they could be trusted to provide assistance should their safety be compromised, as shown by the following comments from PCSOs;

"The police [service] itself are excellent at protecting your personal welfare and without a doubt if there's any possibility that we were in danger they'd [NPOs] be out. They know how nuts things can get" (PCSO Lowe, Observation B12, p5).

"What I think they do is take ownership of you. I think they feel quite responsible for you. Simply in the fact that you're going out, you've got nothing to protect yourself, so you do feel part of a team in certain respects" (Interview with PCSO Jameson, p21).

However, such solidarity and support, according to PCSOs, was not so pronounced when they were first implemented. Interviews with more experienced PCSOs suggest NPOs were initially distant, cynical to the role and willingly distanced themselves from their activities. The limitations of the PCSO role with regards to crime control combined with negative media coverage and opposition by the Police Federation had led to negativity and

low expectations in terms of their potential benefit to the organisation. It was only after PCSOs developed policing skills and NPOs were able to observe the potential value of their efforts in terms of crime control and so form relationships with individual PCSOs that barriers could be broken down and reciprocal relations could develop, as PCSOs

> "They'd never admit it but they value us a lot more than they did as they now know what we can and can't do and [laughing] we're not as useless as the Police Federation think we are" (Interview with PCSO Lowe, p5).

> "When we got to the station nobody knew how to take us, what sorts of things we could do, you know, and I think a lot of people thought we were doing a lot less than we could've been doing. So, it was hard, but I suppose like anything you had to work hard and prove your worth" (Interview with PCSO Clark, p12).

This transition in officer attitudes towards PCSOs and the development of solidarity within the neighbourhood team occurred as PCSOs learnt the craft skills of policing, demonstrated their competence and provided operational support to neighbourhood officers. Those PCSOs who showed their enthusiasm for crime control and to act autonomously were rewarded with greater integration into team. This was exemplified by a community sergeant, who assumed responsibility for supervision of PCSOs upon their introduction in the first case study area;

> "It's the best it's been at the minute. They're always on time, they're always out. In fact, I get fewer problems with them than I do with the cops. I mean we had to sit down at the beginning to set parameters about judgement, when its worthwhile to get us down and when they need to manage a certain level of risk but that all comes with experience and most of them are spot on now and just get on with it" (Focus Group A, p2).

Certainly, as an external observer, it was clear that individual PCSOs who demonstrated independence, judgement and commitment to the role were

more likely to win the recognition and respect of their NPO colleagues and feel an integrated member of the team than those who did not. Not only did those individual PCSOs who showed an aptitude towards police work become more integrated within the neighbourhood team, but NPOs were more likely to involve these PCSOs in decision making and to show a willingness to work collaboratively with them. PCSOs within both case study areas recognised the importance of exceeding NPO expectations of the role and supporting sworn officers as much as possible, as demonstrated in the following comments;

> "You go out there and you do your job. When it comes to jobs and scenes, you shout up and you get yourself known in your team and amongst the shifts that you're willing to get stuck in and help, so then you fit in. I liked the fact that people [NPOs] would come to me first as they knew they could rely on me. They had confidence in me I suppose" (Interview with PCSO Clark, p14).

As PCSOs become more involved in wider crime control activities and work more closely with NPOs, they become less distinctive in the organisation. In order to integrate themselves into the organisation PCSOs are more likely to adopt characteristics defined by the dominant culture rather than those derived from their unique experience of police work and position within the organisation.

Despite such commendations and positive relationships within neighbourhood teams tensions continue to exist due to the limitations of the PCSO role and expectations of NPOs. There were occasions during observations on the street and in the canteen chatter of the station (Waddington, 1999) whereby NPOs explicitly belittled the PCSO role and their subordinate status within the organisation, as illustrated in the observations and a comment made by PCSO Lowe whilst on patrol;

> I asked PCSO Elliot and PCSO Wilson if they were looking forward to their week's annual leave. Before they could answer, one of the NPOs flippantly said, "What? You're on leave for a week? [name of area] will go to the dogs without the PCSOs". Then directing his comment to

one PCSO, he mused, “Well, those who do any work round here that is”. The other two PCSOs to whom his comments were directed appeared not to notice (Observation B32, p1).

A member of support staff came into the office asking to speak with PCSO Clark, who had not long since left the role to become a police officer. [name of NPO] informed her, “She doesn’t exist, she’s left to become a proper copper” (Observation B17, p5).

PCSO Lowe – “We were on the bus on our way to [placename] and they [NPOs] were saying to [PCSO Clark] “You’re one of us now!”. Imagine how that made us feel, and that’s after 4 years” (Observation B17, p4).

Despite improvements in relations following their implementation and a developing sense of teamwork and collegiality between PCSOs and NPOs, clear distinctions in power and status between NPOs and PCSOs exist within the hierarchical structure of the organisation. This differential in power was more pronounced in the second case study area whereby there was a more distinct separation between the activities of NPOs and PCSOs. PCSOs tended to operate on the perimeter of crime control efforts and activities were less likely to be tasked and integrated into the work of NPOs. This relaxed approach towards PCSOs contribution to crime control for some Disillusioned PCSOs, including PCSO Lowe below, occurred as a result of a lack of understanding on the part of supervision regarding their experiences on the street,

“He [sergeant] is pretty good but I wish he was more organised cos a lot of the time we’re just left to ourselves and I think we could be more involved if things were planned better and if he came out with us more and he could see what we do and how we could be used...At the beginning he said he’d come out with us in the summer cos I think he prided himself on being hands-on but he never has” (Observation B17, p5).

Whilst PCSO activities might diversify and individual PCSOs might strive to better support the performance culture of the organisation in order to facilitate greater integration, their remit for order maintenance presents a barrier to integration as PCSOs struggle to secure the same sense of value as NPOs. The civilian nature of the PCSO role results in a secondary, and in some respects, outsider status similar to that identified by Mulcahy (1995) in documenting the stigmatising identity of Internal Affairs Officers. This sense of 'otherness' and inferiority unsurprisingly fuels PCSO aspirations to become sworn officers. Only by becoming police officers are they able to secure a stronger occupational identity, be accepted into the police culture and become integrated into the organisation as full members.

Integration with Reactive Shift Officers

PCSOs were acutely aware of the importance of positive contact with regular officers in tackling any misgivings regular officers may hold about the PCSO role. Reflecting the notion of the 'contact hypothesis' (Allport, 1954, in Brown, 2001) that poses that intergroup hostility and prejudice can be tackled through intergroup contact and co-operation towards common goals, findings suggest that regular officers were far more likely to support the PCSO role following positive contact with individual PCSOs, i.e. when PCSOs directly supported performance in relation to crime control. Indeed, all twelve PCSOs identified individual reactive officers with whom they had been able to establish positive working relationships following contact. Positive contact typically involved the identification of suspects from CCTV or photo stills, locating missing persons and providing intelligence to support arrests. PCSO integration with regular officers, as within neighbourhood teams, is therefore facilitated by the ability of individual PCSOs to demonstrate their value and contribution to crime control objectives and therefore the extent to which they aligned themselves with cultural goals. The following accounts provided by PCSOs during interview demonstrate support for Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis;

> "You do see a big difference between PCs who have worked with PCSOs and cops who haven't. I think it takes that extra bit to have worked with us, getting to know what we do. I've seen new people come onto the team and not have a clue what we're all about and are stand offish but they've started utilising us, helping us, us helping them and they see that we do have a role to play. You still get some grumpy old cops on the shift who are set in their ways and don't like us no matter what you do" (Interview with PCSO Elliot, p18).

> A lot of them do give us the benefit of the doubt. Quite a few of them have said before we've had contact with them, "PCSOs. What a bunch of lazy so-and-sos, just walking round the streets all day, it's money for old rope!" but then when they work alongside us, have seen how we can help them, have seen the amount of crap we do take from a lot of the toerags and simply that we're doing a job that a lot of them wouldn't do, they do tend to come round" (Interview with PCSO Lowe, p10).

Positive relations between PCSOs and reactive officers were therefore not only shaped by the capacity of PCSOs to demonstrate their value, but were strengthened by the willingness of reactive officers to attempt to understand the nature of the PCSO role and their experiences on the street.

However, contact between PCSOs and reactive shift officers is limited to chance encounters in the station and the ability of PCSOs to provide operational support. PCSOs' fixed shift patterns and their limited capacity to respond to calls for service due to their role and lack of mobility leads to infrequent levels of contact with regular officers. While regular officers will respond to PCSOs requests for support if and when their safety is at question, the limited capacity for PCSOs to work alongside regular officers and demonstrate their ability to contribute to crime control mitigates against the development of collegiality and integration with regular officers. Limited opportunity for PCSOs to build relations with regular officers means that negative perceptions of the PCSO role and their value to the organisation remain (Allport, 1954 in Brown, 2001). PCSOs consequently become less

willing to request support from regular officers due to a widespread belief that help will not be forthcoming due to widespread animosity, preferring instead to rely on NPOs for support and backup when needed as explained by PCSO Slater and Jameson below;

> "If ever we're in trouble or we've got something we'll contact the NPOs first because we know they will respond to us and they'll do the job, so we'll only call for a unit if none of the NPOs are on. My experience is that if you haven't individually helped them they're just not interested...unless you're in trouble, real trouble, then they'll respond. Probably cos they'd get it in the neck if they didn't" (Interview with PCSO Slater, p28).

> "There was one time when we'd asked for a unit to come down to help us disperse a group of about 35 youths cos the NPOs weren't on shift and we didn't feel that we got the back up that we needed. They came down, drove around a bit, and were like looking at us as if we'd wasted their time cos the kids had split up on seeing their car. They were like "Ah, they've gone now, so we've outwitted them, case closed". Of course as soon as they drove off, they [youths] were back. That's the attitude" (Interview with PCSO Jameson, p30).

Misgivings regarding contacting regular officers for support were not however entirely unfounded. PCSO Sparks and PCSO Spencer recalled a situation where they had requested assistance from reactive officers after being confronted by a group of hostile young people on a Bank Holiday whereby officers had failed to respond. Although such experiences were rare, this example understandably resulted in disillusionment from both PCSOs;

> "I was shaking with anger I felt so let down. It took twenty minutes for the police to give a response on the radio to ask if we were ok. Yes, they might have been short staffed, but it makes you think. We were lucky to have gotten away and it could've quite easily ended differently" (PCSO Sparks, Observation A11, p2).

PCSOs also recalled situations whereby they had received explicit hostility from reactive officers when opportunities to work alongside them arose, as implicated in the following account;

> "We had overtime for Bonfire Night last year. There were about ten cops and ten PCSOs drafted in...The Inspector gave us a briefing and it was going to be PC with PC and PCSO with PCSO but then he had the bright idea of teaming PCSOs with PCs. Some of the NPOs were on and they were alright, but I got teamed up with this guy on the shift. He thought he was teamed up with another cop so I had to go downstairs [to the parade room] and say to him, "Look, the Inspector says I'm working with you tonight'. He goes, "Nah, nah, I'm working with [name of PC] over there. I double checked and he was due to work with me. He grudgingly went out and he was miserable all night, complaining, and hardly said two words to me" (Interview with PCSO Elliot, p18).

> PCSO Lowe - "I'd been on the scene [cordon duty] all day, with no break and the officer in charge didn't even introduce herself or anything. So, when it got to the end of my shift I just came back over here and she [officer in charge] called me up to ask me where I was. I told her and she started reprimanding me for not letting her know. I said I didn't know how to contact her since she hadn't introduced herself or given me her collar number so I couldn't. I mean nothing came of it because she'd neglected her duties, but it just shows you how we're treated and how they view us" (Observation B17, p4).

Findings suggest that opposition to the introduction of PCSOs amongst regular officers and their reluctance to engage with and support PCSOs might be explained by the resilience of traditional notions of police work amongst fully sworn officers and the resilience of the police culture to reform.

> “It is very blatent [opposition to PCSOs]. There’s a definite divide....Basically police officers are far more willing to help police officers. Full stop” (Interview 11, p5).

Indeed, a number of PCSOs explained this hostility amongst reactive officers to the PCSO role as part of a wider rejection of and lack of value associated with community oriented policing within the police culture, (Punch, 1979a, Savage, 2003) as illustrated by negativity directed towards NPOs by their sworn officer counterparts due to their disassociation with traditional police work;

> PCSO Spencer - “I think the NPOs have to put up with negativity as well as the shifts criticise them as well” (Observation A12, p4).

> “I think it’s not only PCSOs, I think it’s the community team as a whole. I think especially they’re more cynical of the job role and that we actually try and engage with the community and prevent crime from occurring in the first place. Basically, they don’t know what we all do and see it [community policing] as a soft option” (Interview with PCSO Jameson, p28).

Resistance from regular officers to the introduction of PCSOs and their reluctance to engage with PCSOs needs therefore to be understood in relation to wider perceptions of community policing within the police organisation and the predominance of crime control. Achieving PCSO integration therefore requires more than increasing opportunities for contact to dispel misconceptions about the PCSO role, potentially because of their differing statuses in the organisation. As demonstrated by studies conducted by Chan et al (1996) and Loftus (2009) in relation to the resilience of the police culture to multiculturalism and the integration of minority ethnic officers, PCSO integration within the police organisation is also impeded by the dominant police culture and traditional notions of police work. It is equally possible that PCSOs are denied in-group membership and integration into the organisation due to insufficient institutional support for police reform. Despite increasing specialisation and emphasis upon crimefighting over service aspects of the police role, symbolising an increasing trend of

civilianisation, PCSOs represent a threat to the professional identity and insularity held by police officers.

In summary, this section has argued that PCSOs feel a much greater affiliation with their NPO colleagues than reactive officers as a consequence of increased levels of contact, shared areas of deployment and opportunities to work collaboratively that better enable them to demonstrate their value and craft skills. Those PCSOs who develop good judgement, exercise autonomy and who are successful in feeding into crime control efforts are more likely to report increased feelings of integration within neighbourhood teams. PCSO integration within neighbourhood police teams is therefore dependent upon their ability to master the craft skills of crime control, rather than reassurance. Those who fail to do so remain on the fringes of the team, whilst those who can demonstrate their ability to feed into crime control objectives are deemed more effective, valuable members of the team.

The ability of PCSOs to become integrated within the wider organisation is less straightforward. Despite evidence that individual PCSOs have been able to develop reciprocal relationships with individual regular officers following opportunities for collaboration, contact is far less frequent than with neighbourhood police officers affording less opportunity for PCSOs to demonstrate their skills and value to crime control. PCSO integration within the wider organisation is restricted by the dominance of traditional notions of police work and the devaluation of order maintenance and community policing amongst regular officers.

Summary

This chapter has argued that whilst PCSOs are providing a valuable supportive role within neighbourhood policing teams their perceived value is framed within the context of crime control and enforcement rather than reassurance. The working environment within neighbourhood policing teams continues to be characterised by the traditional crime fighting culture and associated characteristics of traditional police culture.

Emphasis upon crime control and enforcement leads PCSOs to feel a pressure to demonstrate their value to the organisation in such terms and for PCSOs to be utilised as a reactive resource. As a result of such pressures and the demand for PCSOs to free up resources, PCSOs experience mission creep and become progressively involved in tasks typically falling within the remit of police officers. Organisational demands to respond to calls for service are given greater prominence than those associated with community relations. As such, PCSOs' capacity to deliver visibility, familiarity and accessibility is significantly impeded by the priority afforded to traditional, reactive approaches to police work.

PCSOs have been able to demonstrate their value to crime control objectives and have therefore developed closer working relationships with NPOs than with regular officers due to their shared remit and incorporation within neighbourhood policing teams. However, despite efforts to feed into wider efforts of crime control and challenge misgivings regarding their contribution to front line policing, negative perceptions remain. As such, PCSO integration into the wider organisation is hampered by adherence to traditional notions of police work and the traditional police culture.

Chapter 8 – PCSOs and the Police Occupational Culture

Summary of findings

This study has demonstrated that PCSOs have a different experience of police work and working within the police organisation than that of sworn police officers. The limited authority within their role and restricted remit reduces their capacity to engage in crime control limits their sense of value and status within the organisation. Driven by their desire to become police officers, PCSOs find that they must develop craft skills of policing, particularly the ability to use communication, persuasion and negotiation (Van Maanen, 1973, Fielding, 1988, Chatterton, 1995) to overcome such limitations if they are to secure compliance from those they seek to control and to feed into crime control objectives of the organisation. In order to support greater integration into the organisation, PCSOs, albeit to varying degrees, align themselves with characteristics of the traditional occupational culture of police officers. Whilst findings suggest that PCSOs do not entirely reject their remit of reassurance and engagement, involvement in 'softer' forms of policing are driven by the potential of such activities to feed into crime control and enforcement.

Operating as members of the police organisation in areas with limited consensus, PCSOs experience challenges to their authority and legitimacy from certain sections of the public, frequently resulting in hostility and abuse. In order to reclaim a sense of legitimacy and credibility, PCSOs focus upon reassuring the vulnerable and the respectable at the expense of increasing control of the young and anti-social. In seeking to control such groups PCSOs adopt one of two approaches; a befriending approach that draws upon the use of craft skills of negotiation and persuasion to achieve compliance, and a less discretionary authoritative approach. Driven by their limited authority and dependence upon sworn officers, PCSOs are more likely to rely upon a befriending approach due to its increased capacity for

engagement and compliance. Whilst PCSOs are able to provide reassurance within target communities, they are deployed according to the crime control demands of the organisation (Crawford et al, 2003). PCSOs are deployed in a way that maximises their potential to support the crime control imperatives of sworn officers and improves the performance of the wider neighbourhood policing team. Area commanders have sought to utilise PCSOs as a mechanism for intelligence gathering, supporting arrests, identifying suspects and responding to calls for service by members of the public. The power of the performance culture in the organisation is such that PCSOs are increasingly utilised in tasks outside of their remit providing evidence of 'mission creep' (Caless, 2007) and as a reactive resource to disorder and anti-social behaviour. Diverted from their primary role of reassurance, PCSOs subsequently become increasingly involved in reactive police work and in tasks associated with the role of a police officer. However, despite support for the 'contact hypothesis' (Allport, 1954), their integration is impeded by their limited capacity to engage in crime control and the dominant police culture.

In the absence of previous research documenting the socialisation and experiences of PCSOs, this research provides valuable insight into the impact of the traditional police culture upon PCSO orientations to their role, the delivery of reassurance and their integration within the police organisation. The following discussion will firstly examine the impact of the traditional police culture upon the construction of a PCSO subculture before going onto provide a wider debate in relation to the tensions and challenges involved in the delivery of reassurance.

Variations on a Theme

An Emerging PCSO Typology: Orientations to Reassurance

Whilst there has been increasing recognition of the plurality of cultures amongst police officers (Reuss-Ianni, 1983, Chan, 1996, Waddington 1999b,

Paoline, 2003, 2006, Foster, 2003), policing research, with the exception of Gill and Mawby (1990), has yet to explore the emergence and development of cultural variation caused by the increasing civilianisation of public policing. Studies detailing the emergence of occupational cultures of non-sworn personnel tasked with the provision of security and crime control have began to emerge (Miccuci, 1998, Rigakos, 2002, Singh and Kempa, 2007) in reaction to the expansion of private security over the past three decades (Shearing and Stenning, 1981, Johnston, 1992). Yet, the implications posed by the consolidation of civilianisation (Johnston, 2007) within the police organisation upon discourses around policing cultures have been neglected.

This study goes some way to fill this void by exploring the influence of the traditional police culture and accepted forms of cultural knowledge held by police officers upon the construction of a PCSO culture, and the emergence of specific orientations and distinct cultural characteristics held by PCSOs due to their unique experience of police work and position in the organisation. Chapter 5 identified that the majority of PCSOs engaged in this study typically hold strong aspirations to become fully sworn police officers and a subsequent eagerness to engage in crime control activities of police work rather than order maintenance and reassurance associated with their role. As demonstrated within Chapter 6 and 7, such aspirations are encouraged by the crime control ethos of the organisation that prioritises crimefighting over public engagement and reassurance. Despite shared aspirations and the pull of the performance culture, PCSOs can be differentiated according to their orientations to the PCSO role and the coping mechanisms they develop to manage their occupational environment, their subordinate status in the organisation and the limitations within their role. These different orientations or PCSO styles can be categorised within a three-fold typology.

As outlined in Chapter 2, support for variation within police culture has been provided by police studies through the use of police officer typologies. The construction of a PCSO typology of orientations to the role therefore reflects the theoretical approach adopted within studies of police culture, as provided by Muir (1977), Broderick (1977) and Reiner (1978) and more

recently, that of Micucci (1998) and Rigakos (2002)in their studies of work styles within the private security sector. Police officer typologies of officer styles or orientations to police work commonly identify the role conflict experienced by police officers in managing the competing public demands of crime control, order maintenance and general service. Constructing a typology of PCSO orientations to work not only highlights role conflict between reassurance and crime control but demonstrates variations in the way that PCSOs adapt to their occupational environment. As argued by Micucci (1998) gaining insight into the ways in which officer styles unite and conflict with one another has important implications for both officers' socialisation into the organisation and the conduct of police work. Typologies also offer benefits in terms of organisational performance and reform. Firstly, identifying patterns of similarity and difference between individual characteristics and by organisational characteristics, typologies are a beneficial way of assessing whether organisational objectives are being met. Secondly, in identifying the ways in which role orientations depart from organisational objectives, typologies can also be a valuable way of highlighting specific barriers to organisational change; a particularly relevant concern for understanding the implementation of neighbourhood policing.

Despite their potential benefits, it is important to differentiate between the specific criteria and context upon which such classifications are based. Not only are typologies constructed in particular historical, geographical and social contexts and conducted with police officers that makes comparison with this study problematic, they vary according to their specific focus and subject of analysis. Whilst Muir (1977) sought to distinguish police officers according to the way in which they deal with citizens, particularly officer's management of coercive power, Broderick (1977) sought to provide a framework for understanding the different ways in which police officers adapt to their occupational environment, and Reiner (1978) focused upon exploring differing orientations to work, rationales for becoming a police officer, job satisfaction and relationships with others within the organisation. Drawing upon an analysis of a unionised security force in Canada rather than police officers, Miccuci (1998) categorised private security officers according to

background characteristics, work preferences and behaviours and their relationships towards security colleagues and the public. All of the above studies highlight themes that are relevant to this study, but those explored by Reiner (1978) resemble more closely the criteria utilised in constructing of the following typology.

Each of the twelve PCSOs engaging in the study were categorised according to their rationales for becoming a PCSO, their orientations to the role, their internalisation of features of the traditional police culture, their levels of job satisfaction, and perceptions of and relationships with target communities. Whilst it is important not to lose sight of the role of the individual in accepting or rejecting dominant cultural attitudes (Fielding, 1988, Chan, 1996, Waddington, 1999b) and variation in the extent to which individual PCSOs endorsed particular cultural attitudes and role orientations within each classification, three distinct ideal types or styles of PCSO can be discerned from the data; the Professional PCSO, the Frustrated PCSO and the Disillusioned PCSO. Table 3 below outlines the distribution of classifications amongst the sample of PCSOs engaged in this study according to area of deployment.

Officer	PCSO Classification	Case Study Area
PCSO Spencer	Disillusioned	1
PCSO Sparks	Frustrated	1
PCSO Carruthers	Professional	1
PCSO Slater	Professional	1
PCSO Preston	Frustrated	1
PCSO Jameson	Professional	1
PCSO Elliot	Professional	2
PCSO Brooks	Frustrated	2
PCSO Wilson	Professional	2
PCSO Clark	Professional	2
PCSO Lowe	Disillusioned	2
PCSO Fisher	Disillusioned	2

Table 3: A PCSO Typology: Classification of PCSOs by Case Study Area.

1. The Professional PCSO

Similar to Reiner's (1978) 'bobby', PCSOs in this category are committed to the role, its rationale and to the development of communication, negotiation and persuasion and good judgement as a means of complementing the work of police officers. Professional PCSOs joined the role as a way of gaining experience of, and to assess their suitability, to police work. Professional PCSOs perceive the role as an opportunity to accumulate valuable experience and to develop craft skills to support their advancement towards becoming police officers. Whilst the majority had aspirations to become police officers, they adopted a wider role definition than 'Frustrated' or 'Disillusioned PCSOs' leading to a greater willingness to engage in activities associated with order maintenance, community engagement and reassurance.

Unlike those falling within the category of 'The Frustrated PCSO', PCSOs falling within this category are better able to balance the demands of reassurance with the crime control needs of the organisation. Whilst endorsing functional aspects of the police culture, such as suspicion and solidarity, the Professional PCSO does so in order to increase their effectiveness and to maximise their support to law-abiding sections of the community and are therefore less inclined to cynicism.

Aligning themselves to the community as well as the organisation, they express greater satisfaction in the role and a sense of value than the other two categories of PCSO placing emphasis on engagement and providing a service to the public. Whilst less determined to engage in crime control activities, Professional PCSOs are committed to working alongside target communities in order to respond to their concerns and develop more proactive solutions to disorder and anti-social behaviour.

Professional PCSOs were most likely to adopt a 'befriending approach' in dealings with the public. This approach to engagement frequently involved drawing upon principles of procedural justice to facilitate compliance of those who challenge their authority, and to encourage the co-operation of law abiding members of the public. As a consequence, Professional PCSOs

typically enjoyed higher levels of legitimacy than Frustrated or Disillusioned PCSOs.

Six out of twelve PCSOs exhibited characteristics associated with the Professional PCSO.

2. The Frustrated PCSO

Similar to Reiner's (1978) 'New Centurion' and Muir's (1977) 'Enforcer', the Frustrated PCSO tends to have a narrow role conception, defining their role in terms of crime fighting and supporting the enforcement efforts of police officers rather than addressing the needs of the community. Whilst not rejecting the community support aspects of their role entirely, they are less empathetic to the circumstances surrounding offending, are less concerned about problem solving and developing long term solutions, and are more pessimistic about the potential for community engagement and collaboration in tackling problems. Frustrated PCSOs are more likely to adopt an authoritative approach in their dealings with the public leading them to call upon the support of police officers at an earlier stage during efforts to secure compliance.

These PCSOs are entirely motivated by the prospect of working alongside police officers and becoming involved in the control and enforcement of those who do not respect the law, their authority or the police organisation more generally. They therefore secure job satisfaction when they work alongside police officers and when they have achieved success in supporting arrests and prosecution of suspects. As such, the Frustrated PCSO is more likely to endorse all six of the cultural characteristics discussed above, particularly sense of mission/love of action, masculinity and sense of competition.

Despite frustration with the role and its limited capacity for engagement in 'real police work', a degree of commitment to the role, albeit lower than that held by Professional PCSOs, is retained due to the potential to become involved in crime control opportunities. Their ambitions to become

police officers are sustained and in some cases strengthened through the cumulative experience of police work and in working alongside police officers.

Three out of twelve PCSOs exhibited characteristics associated with the Frustrated PCSO.

3. The Disillusioned PCSO

Three out of twelve PCSOs exhibited characteristics associated with the Disillusioned PCSO. Deeply frustrated and disenchanted with the role due to its lack of variation and their limited capacity to tackle problems encountered via enforcement and the lack of perceived value from other officers and the organisation, Disillusioned PCSOs become withdrawn from the job and are apathetic to its purpose. Disillusioned PCSOs were attracted to the role from a desire to support communities in tackling criminal and anti-social behaviour rather than as a result of a strong ambition to become a police officer. However, once in the role they realised that their capacity to confront problems and challenge those responsible was limited causing these benevolent intentions to be discarded.

Delivering reassurance to target communities for these officers is therefore severely hindered by their limited capacity to use authority and enforce the law. For Disillusioned PCSOs, the limited authority within their current role not only prevents them from meeting public expectations, but has the potential consequence of provoking a further loss in confidence in the police and hinders the development of trust and engagement. Disillusioned PCSOs, although more likely to adopt a befriending than an authoritative approach, were less successful in securing compliance due to their limited attainment of essential craft skills and command of a procedural justice style of policing. Undermined by their limited ability to feed into those crime control activities valued by the organisation, they pay lip service to the role, adopting a narrow role definition of visibility

Similar to Reiner's (1978) 'Uniform Carrier' and Muir's (1977) 'Avoider', they adopt a cynical perspective of the community, are less empathetic to the circumstances surrounding offending and question the potential for those involved in criminal or anti-social activity to amend their behaviour. PCSOs falling within this category, no longer, if they ever did, hold aspirations to become police officers and are in a state of uncertainty about their future careers, seeing no long term future either in their career as a PCSO or in the longer term future of the PCSO role. As a result, they are less committed to developing craft skills, learning tactics to increase their effectiveness or proving their worth to police officer colleagues. Rather than a sense of mission transcending the job itself – as found amongst Frustrated PCSOs – the job remains a means to an end and a temporary position until they find another that offers a greater promise of job satisfaction.

Three out of twelve PCSOs exhibited characteristics associated with the Disillusioned PCSO.

As identified in earlier typologies of policing, PCSOs experience considerable role conflict in their efforts to satisfy the crime control demands of the organisation and the delivery of reassurance and service functions of police work specified within their remit. It is clear from the typology that, despite variation between the three classifications, PCSOs assimilate themselves with the cultural characteristics of the traditional occupational and organisational culture. Aspirations to become police officers and a desire for a greater sense of value and increased integration into organisation provoke an orientation towards crimefighting over reassurance and engagement causing PCSOs to imitate police officers and pursue organisational crime control objectives of the organisation. The dominant police performance culture permeates role orientations and behaviour of PCSOs on the street, even amongst Professional PCSOs who adopt a wider role orientation and retain a greater commitment to reassurance. Its impact is greatest amongst Frustrated PCSOs who experience more acutely the limited authority within the PCSO role and their limited capacity to engage in 'real police work' (Skolnick, 1966). Frustrated PCSOs subsequently embrace

the characteristics of solidarity, isolation, masculinity and sense of mission to a greater extent than either Professional or Frustrated PCSOs. Where Professional PCSOs embrace traditional characteristics of suspicion and solidarity, they do so as a means of supporting greater opportunities for involvement in a wider variation of activities and towards skill development in order to support their aspirations to become police officers. Whilst also embittered by the limitations within the PCSO role, the cultural characteristics of solidarity, mission and isolation are less pronounced amongst Disillusioned PCSOs. Their limited authority and subsequent ability to contribute to crime control cultivates a cynical worldview and detachment from both the objectives of reassurance and those of the organisation.

The defining influence of the traditional police culture exerts a powerful influence upon the development of a PCSO culture. The prevailing pull of the performance culture and the crime control ethos of the organisation in certain respects cause PCSOs to become passive recipients of the traditional occupational culture. In many respects this transferral of cultural knowledge and traditional characteristics is welcomed by PCSOs due to their aspirations to become police officers and a desire for greater integration into the organisation. The performance culture and the increasing involvement of PCSOs in mission creep and reactive duties (Caless, 2007) ultimately serve to hinder the development of a distinct PCSO occupational culture. Whilst PCSOs are socialised into the traditional culture and its associated working rules, they are simultaneously excluded from it. Their civilian status, limited authority and remit for order maintenance, community engagement and reassurance distances them from fully sworn officers as they are denied full membership within the culture. In reaction, PCSOs cannot circumvent their ‘outsider’ status.

A key objective of the study was to explore the drivers and inhibitors to effective practice and integration. The above typology clearly has significant implications for police reform and organisational change. Half of the PCSOs engaged in the study exhibited cultural characteristics and orientations to the role that are inconsistent with the objectives of community

engagement and reassurance intended by their introduction. Despite the recent national implementation of neighbourhood policing and efforts to reinstate quality of service and order maintenance within local policing (Quinton and Morris, 2008), the ability of such efforts to realign the police with the public and improve public satisfaction is mitigated by the resilience of the dominant traditional police culture (Brown, 1992). It would appear that whilst PCSOs have helped to support efforts towards increasing diversity within police work (Johnston, 2006, 2007), the pull of the performance culture and the alliance of crime control with notions of 'real police work' remain. However, there are a number of qualifications that should be made regarding this model of a PCSO subculture, orientations to the role and endorsement of the traditional police culture.

First, this study cannot deduce generalisations about occupational attitudes and characteristics held by PCSOs within other forces. As illustrated by Foster (1989) in her analysis of styles of policing within two sectors within the Metropolitan Police, the dominance of the traditional police culture within other police forces may be less pronounced leaving PCSOs with an increased opportunity to commit to engagement and service aspects of their role. There may be a greater organisational commitment to, and greater historical tradition towards, community oriented policing within other forces that potentially could lead to a greater proportion of PCSOs displaying characteristics attributed to Profesionnal PCSOs. As implicated by Cochran and Bromley (2003), the scope for organisational reform may therefore be greater in some forces than in others. Second, this research was conducted with PCSOs with limited powers of enforcement; PCSOs operating with extended powers, for example, the power of detention, might experience differing levels of integration and levels of interaction with the traditional police culture. Third, as identified by Herbert (1998) individual PCSOs may develop individual normative orders to the role as their experiences on the street thereby causing their allegiance to the police culture and identification with a particular ideal type to vary over time.

Despite variation in organisational style and commitment to community oriented policing, specific powers of enforcement held by PCSOs

across forces and shifts in alliances to particular ideal types, it is likely that the traditional police culture will continue to exert a strong influence upon PCSO socialisation and cultural attitudes. PCSOs will still share the same role, civilian status and limited authority and are thus likely to experience similar challenges in delivering reassurance as identified by PCSOs engaged in this study. What is perhaps most telling in this analysis is the continuity between early typological studies of police officers (Muir, 1977, Broderick, 1977 and Reiner, 1978) and private security personnel (Micucci, 1998, Rigakos, 2002, Singh and Kempa, 2007, Button, 2007) and the PCSO typology presented here; whilst there is evidence of variation between officers, the traditional police culture remains intact and acts as a barrier towards police reform. The following section will explore the implications presented to the delivery of reassurance and the future of the PCSO role by the traditional crimefighting notions within the dominant culture.

Crime Control Imperatives and the Delivery of Reassurance

The limited capacity of PCSOs to engage in crime control, the lack of value attached to reassurance by the organisation and widely held aspirations amongst PCSOs to become police officers present significant obstacles to the sustained commitment of PCSOs to reassurance. Whilst Professional PCSOs adopt a wider orientation to the role and maintain a greater commitment to reassurance, they are driven by the potential of the role to supply them with the craft skills of policing to support their aspirations to become police officers. Plans by the NPIA to develop professional career pathways to assist career PCSOs to become police officers (Home Office, 2010) are likely to be welcomed by PCSOs if this also facilitates greater opportunity for variation within the role, increased support from police officers, and enables a smoother progression into the police force. However, such moves are likely to negatively impact upon the commitment to ‘softer’ policing within the organisation and subsequent levels of commitment of PCSOs to the delivery of reassurance. Efforts to fast track PCSOs into becoming police officers run the risk of further inhibiting their commitment

towards public engagement and the development of community relations in favour of engagement in crime control. As greater numbers of PCSOs advance into the police force, staff turnover will increase, continuity of presence and reciprocal relations with the public will be lost, and the crimefighting ethos of the organisation will prevail.

Findings of this study have demonstrated that despite their limited authority and training PCSOs are increasingly abstracted from target communities and efforts to deliver reassurance in order to support the crime control demands of the organisation. The implementation failures identified in previous studies of community oriented policing (Lurigio and Skogan, 1994, Rosenbaum, 1994, Skogan and Hartnett, 1997, Crawford et al, 2003) seem to have resurfaced under the rubric of neighbourhood policing. Efforts to protect PCSOs from being abstracted to fulfil operational duties have proven ineffectual against the pull of crimefighting and the performance culture of the organisation. Supporting conclusions made by Aronowitz (1997) and Crawford et al (2003), this study also demonstrates that the reality of police work is such that repressive and reactive demands continue to take precedence over crime prevention and problem solving. NPOs were ultimately committed to satisfying crime control demands spending very little time engaging with the community, and PCSOs were only able to devote time to engagement and towards the delivery of reassurance in the absence of more pressing crime control concerns. It would therefore appear that despite its repackaging, neighbourhood policing remains on the periphery of policing (Lumb and Wang, 2006). The performance culture of the organisation supports the absorption of characteristics of the traditional police culture by both police officers and PCSOs causing order maintenance and service aspects of policing to become devalued. The delivery of ‘citizen focused’ policing does not therefore refer to responding to local public concerns in order to provide reassurance, but is driven by a desire to enforce and support performance indicators. As identified by Millie and Herrington (2006) reassurance will therefore always become a secondary concern when operationalised in a culture that continues to prioritise traditional reactive policing over order maintenance and community engagement.

The failure of efforts to protect against PCSO abstraction raises important questions in relation to the capacity of the role to remain distinct within the organisation. Emphasis is placed upon their capacity to support police officers and releasing them from aspects of police work that do not require powers of enforcement. Despite assertions made by the Chief Constable of the force involved in this study that PCSOs will not be awarded increased powers of enforcement, the deployment of PCSOs as a reactive resource and their engagement in 'mission creep' would suggest widespread support for the introduction of additional powers from area commanders. Facing pressure to provide value for money and quality of service to the public, area commanders perceive PCSOs as an additional resource towards improving performance. Whilst PCSOs are currently restricted in the tasks in which they can expect to engage due to their limited authority, the operational freedom enjoyed by area commanders and by police officers on the ground is likely to encourage neighbourhood policing teams to seek more varied and inventive ways for PCSOs to alleviate demands placed upon police officers. It is likely that these additional duties will further detract PCSOs away from their remit of reassurance and involve them in activities that would fundamentally alter their non-confrontational role and place them at greater risk.

The abstraction of PCSOs into crime control functions of the police raise doubts regarding the capacity of PCSOs to delivery reassurance. Whilst this study did not seek to measure the impact of PCSOs upon reassurance per se, observations of PCSOs on patrol suggest PCSOs are still able to deliver reassurance within target communities via "visibility, familiarity and accessibility" (HMIC, 2001b) and through their efforts to tackle anti-social behaviour and youth disorder. However, PCSOs do not seek to deliver reassurance equally throughout target communities. Challenges to their legitimacy and credibility by some sections of the public cause PCSOs to focus their efforts upon reassuring those who recognise their authority and respect the police organisation – the 'vulnerable' and the 'respectable' – and to tackle 'signal crimes' (Innes, 2005) identified by such groups. Clearly this raises questions in relation to the equality of provision and the imposition of

judgement relating to notions of the deserving and undeserving, of the respectable and the disrespectable. The limited support for PCSOs within target areas draws attention to one of the central myths of community policing identified by Brogden and Nijhar (2005); the universal relevance of community policing. PCSOs were limited in their capacity to engage in target areas due to widespread opposition to and lack of trust in the police; a large proportion of residents within target communities did not welcome PCSOs and would not engage. Working within a hostile occupational environment PCSOs frequently face situations of conflict and threats to their safety.

The lack of support experienced by PCSOs engaged in this study begs the question of whether PCSOs should only be targeted within low crime communities where there is greater demand for police visibility, greater confidence in the police and where their legitimacy is recognised. However this raises four key issues. First, this study highlights the success experienced by Professional PCSOs in engaging with young people engaged in anti-social behaviour through the adoption of a befriending approach and through the application of procedural based policing techniques (Tyler, 2006). There is therefore significant potential for PCSOs to augment public perceptions of individual legitimacy and secure greater control within target communities. However, their ability to do so is dependent upon receiving sufficient encouragement from the organisation to adopt a procedurally based approach in their dealings with young people as opposed to one of zero tolerance. Second, allocating PCSOs to areas with low levels of crime and disorder contravenes notions that police resources ought to be distributed according to need. The police have a duty of care to law-abiding members of the public living within communities of conflict. Their right to security is as great as any other citizen. Third, whilst demand for police presence and opportunities for engagement might be greater in more consensual communities (Bennett, 1994), it is questionable whether PCSOs can satisfy public expectations in these areas due to their limited authority and powers of enforcement. Whilst it may be the case that PCSOs are less likely to confront problems falling beyond their remit in low crime areas and therefore be in a position where they are unable to act, the limitations of the

role mean that PCSOs may fail to secure widespread legitimacy to any greater degree. PCSOs engaged in this study identified feeling a pressure to enforce when dealing with anti-social behaviour. Whilst PCSOs are better able to devote their time to 'softer' policing, they are ultimately dependent upon the availability of police officers to provide enforcement. Fourth, the organisation will continue to utilise PCSOs to satisfy crime control demands thereby detracting them away from engagement. PCSOs will continue to experience difficulties in balanced public expectations for visibility with organisational demands particularly since demands for visibility tend to be greatest amongst those who support the police. PCSOs might be able to deliver more effective policing by gathering intelligence, tackling youth disorder and dealing with disturbances whilst on patrol, but are likely to disappoint if they are unable to sustain the levels of visibility expected of them.

The commitment of police forces to neighbourhood and reassurance policing appears therefore to be grounded in rhetoric rather than substance. Despite the national implementation of neighbourhood policing as a model towards citizen focused policing and benevolent intentions of some PCSOs and NPOs, imperatives of reassurance and order maintenance remain secondary to crime control demands of the organisation. As Millie and Herrington (2006) suggest, reassurance has remained an add-on and has failed to have any significant impact upon working practices. Reassurance and neighbourhood policing, like community policing before them, appears to serve more as a legitimating technique rather than a means of reforming policing practices. Its imprecise nature has allowed reassurance to be conceived of as 'reassurance through enforcement' supporting the continued dominance of crime control and traditional crimefighting strategies as opposed to 'reassurance through engagement'. Perhaps Waddington (1984; 91) was correct when he identified community policing as a 'romantic delusion' that is only pursued and supported by those who desire for a return to the mythical Golden Age of Policing.

Implications of Findings

This final section explores the policy implications presented by the key findings contained within this thesis. The discussion that follows provides reflections upon the current management and governance of the PCSO role, explores potential directions for the future of the PCSO role within a climate of economic austerity, and examines the wider impact of PCSOs and reassurance upon policing. In so doing, the section makes a number of policy recommendations designed to augment PCSO legitimacy and authority within target communities, to enable PCSOs to have a more responsive role within current policy directions surrounding voluntarism and community capacity building, and to re-instate the importance of engagement and reassurance within the PCSO role and within wider principles of policing.

The deployment of PCSOs has undoubtedly assisted in making the police service more representative of the diverse communities they serve (Crawford et al, 2004, Chatterton, 2005, Johnston, 2006, and Cooper et al, 2006). Likewise, the diverse work histories and experience PCSOs bring into the role and the wider social and demographic backgrounds from which they are drawn have the potential of increasing the ability of the police to reconnect with local communities and support more sensitive policing. However, ultimately the success of the PCSO role within neighbourhood policing will be determined by the strength of individual personalities, the commitment of individual PCSOs to community engagement and their mastery of craft skills relevant to reassurance.

The introduction of PCSOs within public policing represents something of a wasted opportunity by the police. This study has demonstrated that some PCSOs, in this case Professional PCSOs, do adopt an orientation to the role befitting their original intention. However, the pressures posed by an enduring performance culture and the imposing emphasis upon managerialism within public policing have constructed the role in terms of crime control that has consequently mitigated against the delivery of reassurance and has hindered their capacity to have a lasting impact upon policing. Findings demonstrate that emphasis upon crime

control within the dominant police culture threatens the capacity of PCSOs to engage with the public and opportunities to rebuild public confidence and police legitimacy. Crime control objectives of the organisation have driven PCSO training, their socialisation into organisation and their deployment within local communities, with little regard for how reassurance and engagement might be achieved in practice. Home Office and force policy appears content with making the assumption that PCSOs will be able to successfully engage with and reassure local communities through cumulative experience and simply by being visible and accessible to the public. Little regard has been paid to the challenges PCSOs might experience in maintaining order and delivering reassurance within the confines of the role. This study provides unique insight into the challenges faced by PCSOs and the indispensability of the craft skills of communication, persuasion, negotiation to both community engagement, and control and compliance. It is therefore essential that police forces play an active role in supporting PCSOs to acquire these necessary craft skills and in incorporating principles of procedural based policing within training and supervisory structures.

Fundamentally, this thesis has demonstrated that PCSOs are better able to engage with local communities and experience greater success in achieving compliance when they adopt a befriending approach symptomatic of the principles of procedural justice. Adopting a more authoritative role without the capacity to enforce creates greater dependency of fully sworn officers and further undermines their credibility. That said, increasing PCSO powers as a means of increasing their level of authority is not the answer. PCSOs, like police officers, will invariably experience challenges to their authority and legitimacy when deployed within communities of conflict and there will always be certain sections of the community who will resist engagement at any level. Increasing PCSO powers might satisfy public expectations for enforcement against particular groups and/or signal crimes, but will not necessarily lead to a corresponding increase in control since it will prevent future engagement and will move PCSOs further away from their remit of reassurance. However, when driven by engagement and principles of procedural justice PCSOs are able to set themselves apart from the

organisation and negative attitudes held by these individuals towards the police and are subsequently more likely to exert greater control. Therefore, rather than assuming that PCSOs will be able to engage as a result of being more representative of local communities or will be more effective by increasing the enforcement powers of PCSOs, future emphasis should be placed upon instilling the importance of procedural based policing for policing by consent more generally throughout the organisation and the central role played by PCSOs in achieving this.

Despite looming cuts to police budgets, it is unlikely that PCSOs will be axed completely for three key reasons. Firstly, the PCSO role has evolved considerably since their introduction in 2002. PCSOs have been used flexibility across forces to support front line policing and play an instrumental role in intelligence gathering and supporting crime control objectives. Secondly, the operational freedom enjoyed by local area commanders and the expanding possibilities of activities in which PCSOs can become involved as a consequence of their imprecise role definition and remit enables PCSOs to be utilised as a valuable additional resource for a vast array of duties beyond reassurance. Thirdly, despite challenges to their legitimacy from some sections of the public, the public is now accustomed to the increased levels of visibility provided by PCSOs. Removal of PCSOs is therefore likely to be politically costly. The operational and reassurance benefits associated with PCSOs, particularly at a time when police recruitment is restricted, is likely to prove too attractive to police forces for them to be abandoned entirely.

There are also possible gains to be won in adapting the role of PCSOs to fit the current economic climate and the current policy directive of localism and voluntarism. Notions of self-governing or self-organising communities developed under New Labour (McLaughlin, 2005) have already witnessed something of a resurgence within plans by David Cameron to institute the ‘Big Society’. ‘The Big Society’ supports a laissez-faire approach to state intervention within social life whereby rather than pursuing top down approaches to governance, the state provides a facilitating role towards empowering individuals, families and communities to take control and

responsibility for their own lives (Cameron, 2010). To do so however, individuals and communities are going to need local providers to provide a central role in encouraging and facilitating change. Whilst care is needed to balance crime control efforts with community engagement, there is potential for PCSO to help provide this direction and harness their increased capacity for engagement to support the current policy focus on localism, providing they are properly managed and sufficiently resourced within neighbourhood policing teams. PCSOs could have a more responsive role to play within local neighbourhoods in the current climate of economic austerity, achieving more for less and increasing emphasis directed towards responsibilisation, volunteering, and neighbourhood and place management. However, more sustained efforts would be needed on behalf of the Home Office to outline precisely what role they would have in supporting communities to achieve such ends, to ensure that supportive partnership arrangements were in place, and above all, the significance of this aspect of the PCSO role to building public confidence.

This study has revealed that reassurance remains on the margins of frontline policing and is only pursued when crime control objectives have been achieved or when crime control concerns are absent. As a result, PCSOs only feel valued by the organisation when they are able to contribute to crime control objectives; this sends a clear message to PCSOs that their efforts to engage and reassure are not valued and moreover, that their role, based on these same objectives, provides limited benefit to the organisation. Crime control imperatives will continue to shape perceptions of the PCSO role, determine PCSO activities and shape notions of 'good police work' as long as reassurance and citizen focused policing remain a bolt-on extra (Millie and Herrington, 2006) rather than a 'golden thread' (Millie, 2010) embedded within normative standards of all areas of police work. If reassurance remains as such, the traditional police culture with its emphasis upon crime fighting as the backbone of policing will continue to inform PCSO orientations and levels of commitment to the role. The typology outlined in this thesis illustrates the ways in which the crime control ethos within the police organisation negatively impacts upon levels of PCSO commitment to

the role. Similar pressures, as a consequence of their shared remit, are likely to be faced by PCSOs operating across all forces. Situating reassurance as a central tenet of all areas of policing might help to encourage PCSOs to adopt a role orientation typical of a Professional PCSO. That is not to suggest that PCSOs should not be encouraged to become police officers, but rather greater efforts are needed by the organisation to emphasise to prospective and serving PCSOs the importance of engagement and reassurance to the role, the essentiality of craft skills of communication, persuasion and negotiation to the role, and the limited capacity for crime-fighting within the role. Instead of selling the role as a stepping stone to becoming a police officer, promoting the role in this way might also help to manage levels of anticipatory socialisation and minimise disillusionment with the role once in post.

Re-orienting reassurance not only requires structural changes to organisational philosophies in order to change hearts and minds of police officers, but a shared memorandum of understanding is also needed between the police and the public with regards to the importance of reassurance and the significant role played by PCSOs within policing. Only when the public see that the organisation holds PCSOs in high esteem will there be any real possibility that they will reciprocate that support. In turn, achieving such understanding not only requires greater clarity on the part of the Home Office in outlining the distinctiveness of the PCSO role to that of fully sworn police officers but explaining why PCSOs have a distinct role. Championing their achievements in terms of community engagement and crime prevention as well as crime control, enabling communities a greater opportunity to determine PCSO deployment, and raising public awareness of the diverse ways in which PCSOs can support communities may help to increase public knowledge of PCSOs and go some way in challenging some of the negative images portrayed by the Police Federation in opposing their introduction. Furthermore, increasing public knowledge about the PCSO role and the benefits of a befriending approach and/or engagement with young people might help to manage public expectations of PCSOs and

communicate the benefits of procedural based policing as opposed to zero tolerance policing upon compliance.

The degree to which reassurance becomes embedded within policing more widely will however be determined by the direction of policy debates surrounding public policing and the current governmental spending review. Although the impact of spending cuts upon individual forces is likely to vary according to the reliance on central funding and the way in which cuts are distributed within forces, PCSOs are unlikely to escape government plans to cut police spending by 20% by 2014/2015. Whilst there has been a freeze on the recruitment of police officers and PCSOs, all forces are actively pursuing the expansion of Special Constables as a cost-effective means of augmenting already stretched resources. At the very least, neighbourhood policing teams are likely to be streamlined – including the numbers of PCSOs - as the government comes under increasing pressure to defend its decisions to cut police budgets amid concerns that cuts in police strength might lead to increases in crime and disorder. However, the importance attached to citizen focused policing, localism and the associated de-centralisation and devolution of decision making to local government within policing is unlikely to disappear.

Conclusion

By adopting an appreciative standpoint that places PCSOs and the meanings they attach to their work at the centre of analysis, this study provides a richer understanding of the ways in which PCSOs manage their occupational environment, develop competence, and adapt to the limitations of their role. Accompanying PCSOs on patrol produced shared experiences, facilitated an on-going relationship of trust, and positive ethnographic interviewing whilst on patrol encouraged PCSOs to reflect upon their work in the context in which decisions were made. Adopting a non-judgemental and empathetic approach enabled the researcher to occupy a ‘liminal’ status (Van Maanen, 1979) producing a perspective that was “shared by and

produced in the actual encounter between the participant observer and the subjects" (Hunt, 1984; 283). In so doing, the research was able to achieve insight into the hidden dimensions of PCSOs occupational environment and the nuances of police culture not typically achieved within traditional, more critical studies.

The study makes an important contribution to current understanding of police culture in two opposing directions. Findings suggest that despite police forces being placed under increased scrutiny, increased demands for accountability and efforts towards diversification and partnership working, traditional characteristics of police culture continue to exert a defining influence upon the cultural knowledge and orientations to police work held by police officers. As PCSOs become socialised into the organisation they are exposed to the traditional culture and are more likely to endorse these same characteristics as a means of supporting their integration and aligning themselves with the organisation. However, PCSOs also develop cultural characteristics that are distinct from police officers as a result of their unique experience, limited authority and position in the organisation providing evidence of a distinct police subculture. The tensions inherent within the PCSO role therefore lead to the construction of cultural attitudes and competing orientations to the role that both align and set them apart from sworn police officers. Whilst half of the PCSOs engaged in this study adopted orientations to the role compatible with the objectives of neighbourhood policing and reassurance, others aligned themselves with the characteristics of the traditional culture in a bid to imitate the work of police officers. This has important implications for the delivery of reassurance and controlling aspects of the culture, such as isolation, masculinity and sense of mission, that provoke orientations to crimefighting and present barriers to community engagement and co-operation. However, whilst aspects of the traditional culture and assumptions of 'real police work' continue to influence cultural knowledge, individual PCSOs, as asserted by Chan (1996) and Fielding (1989) in their studies of police culture, actively construct their own approaches to their role and are selective in which features of the dominant culture they adopt.

Emerging appreciative accounts of police subculture provide a useful starting point towards understanding the nature and emergence of a PCSO subculture. Whilst the study suggests that a sizeable proportion of PCSOs maintain a commitment to reassurance, the emerging typology suggests that the traditional police culture exerts a powerful influence upon orientations to police work held by PCSOs hindering their ability to deliver reassurance. Future research on PCSO subcultures should seek to understand the impact of the increasing involvement of PCSOs in mission creep, the introduction of career pathways for PCSOs upon orientations to the role and to reassurance, within the context of a prevailing dominant police culture that serves to hinder police reform. Whilst other areas of civilianisation within the police organisation are not driven by crime control to the same degree, valuable insight might also be gained in understanding orientations to work held by custody support officers, intelligence and surveillance officers, their relationships to other civilian officers and fully sworn officers and identities within the police organisation.

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